THE RARE JEWEL OF CHRISTIAN CONTENTMENT

Wherein is ſhewed;

1. *What* CONTENTMENT *is.*
2. *The holy Art or Myſtery of it.*
3. *Several* Leſſons *that Chriſt teacheth, to work the heart to* Contentment.
4. *The Excellencies of it.*
5. *The Evils of Murmuring.*
6. *The Agravations of the ſin of Murmuring.*

By Jeremiah Burroughs.

The firſt of the Eleven Volums that are publiſhed by

Thomas Goodwyn, *William Bridg.*
William Greenhil, *John Yates.*
Sydrach Simpſon, *William Adderly.*
Phillip Nye,

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To the Reader.

THis worthy Man, especially in his latter times, was surrounded (through Gods blessing on him) with a very great confluence of what might give forth *Contentment* to a vast spirit of his Ranck and Calling. He was enriched with a large measure of Abilities and Opportunities in serving his Lord (to glorifie whom, and do much good to others, is the divine part of a man gracious (which he was) the highest and most solid Satisfaction, and in many respects exceeds what personal Communion with God, singly considered, brings in) Besides, he lived and died in a fulness of honor and esteem with the best of men, of Saints; yea, the worst of enemies: Likewise of Estate, and outward Comforts within his sphære and ranck, all which might and did afford *Contentment* to what was outward in him. In the midst of these, his study was to find out a more sublime way, and hidden art of Self-sufficiency, than was in the power of all things to contribute or teach; Such a skill as did not only poise and compose this spirit in the present enjoyment of all, but might fortifie and furnish him with provision for the future against the loss of all, in times wherein *no man knoweth what evil will be in the Earth*. This Mark his first Lines shew he shot at. This Art some Phylosophers of old pretended themselves Masters of, and to instruct others in, through the assistance of Natural and Motal Elements, elevated to the utmost height their Principles could carry them; but in vain: Their Chymistry in this kind being able to produce no more but a sullen obstinacy and obdurateness of mind. The *Natural Spirit of a Man*, feeling its self greater than all Creatures, gathering up, and consolidating its self into its self, is able (as *Solomon* sales) *to sustein its own, and all others infirmities*. But that *Autarchy* this Author here presents, is a Mystery, which *none of these Princes of the World know, or the wisdom of Man teacheth, but in the holy Ghost teacheth*; and which few, but those that are *perfect*, do attain; Teaching the Soul to deny it self into weakness, emptiness, in, and to its self, and all things else; and thus dissolved to unite it self to Him who only hath blessedness and al-sufficiency, with whom associated and made intimate, it melts it self into al His Intersests, making them its own, and thereby comes to have all that Al-sufficiency of the High God to be its Self-sufficiency: And then, What state can that soul be in, wherein it may not be content? seeing it hath God to be the chiefest comfort in its best

times,

times and only comfort in its worst. This, though it be the inheritance of every Saint, in the right and title to it, yet the possession and enjoyment of it, depends upon an improvement of this inheritance, and that upon a skil which is to be *learned* by experience and much exercise (as *Paul* speaks) *I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be Content.* This piece of learning this serious spirited Man inured himself into, and *digging* for it as *Rubies*, (as *Solomons* Scholler for Wisdom) hath found it, and hath hewn forth this JEWEL (a Title given neither by Himself, not by *Us* the Publishers, to the Subject it self, yet the Materials themselves deserving it) out of the Rock, and hath artificially cut it) that the innate Rayes of this so glorious a Grace might shine forth to others. And here it comes to be presented, though set forth as the richest *Jewels* are, often for a while, in ruder mettals until bargained, but then are placed in Tablets worthy of them. The only seat this is ordained for, is, the precious Tablets of mens Hearts, in, and from which alone the native lustre of it will be made conspicuous. Reader, buy it, set and wear it there, and it *shall* (as *Solomon* speaks, *Prov.* 3. 22. &c.) *Be life unto thy soul, and grace unto thy neck: Thou shalt not be afraid when thou liest down; yea, thy sleep shall be sweet unto thee: for the Lord will be thy confidence.*

Thomas Goodwyn,
Sydrach Simpson,
William Greenhil,
Phillip Nye,
William Bridge,
John Yates,
Will. Adderly.

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2 *Christ in Travel*: Wherein, 1 The Travel of his soul. 2. The first and after effects of his Death. 3. His Assurance of Issue. 4. And His satisfaction therein. Are opened and cleered in three Sermons, on *Esay*, 53. 11.

3 *A Lifting up for the Cast-down*, in case of 1. Great sin. 2. Weakness of Grace. 3. Miscarriage of Duties. 4. Want of Assurance. 5. Affliction. 6. Temptation. 7. Desertion. 8. Unserviceableness. 9. Discouragements from the Condition it self. Delivered in thirteen Sermons on *Psalm*, 42. 11.

His Four Sermons concerning

1 Sin against the Holy Ghost.

2 Sins of Infirmities.

3 The fifth Monarchy.

4 The Good and means of Establishment.

Franciſci Tayleri, Capitula Patrum: Hebraice & Latine edita. Una cum Annotationibus sensum locorum difficilium Experimentibus.

Franciſci Tayleri, Lamentationes Jeremiæ variis, Denuo è fontibus Hebraicis translatæ, cum Paraphrasi Chaldaica, Masora magna & parva, & Commentariis Rabbi Shelomoh, Jarchi & Aben Ezræ, & Buxtorfii Bibliis magnis excerptis.

THE

THE RARE JEWEL OF CHRISTIAN CONTENTMENT.

PHILIPPIANS, 4. 11.

For I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

HERE is a very *seasonable Cordial* to revive the drooping spirits of the Saints in these sad and sinking times: For the *hour of temptation* is already come upon all the world to try the Inhabitants of the earth; and in special, this is the day of *Jacobs* troubles in our own bowels.

Our *great Apostle* experimentally holds forth in this Gospel-Text, the very life and soul of all practical Divinity; wherein we may plainly reade his own proficiency in Christs School; and what lesson every Christian that would evidence the power and growth of godliness in his own soul, must necessarily learn from him.

These words are brought in by *Paul*, as a plain argument to perswade the Philippians that he did not seek after great things in the world, and that he sought not *theirs*, but *them*: He did not pass for a great estate; he had better things to take up his heart withal. I do not speak (saith he) in respect of want, [*For*] whether I have or have not, my heart is fully satisfied, I have enough; *I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.*

I have learned.] Contentment in every condition is a great Art, a special Mysterie: It is to be learned and so to be learned as a Mysterie; And therefore verse 12. he affirms, I *know how to be abased, and I know how to abound, every where and in all things I am instructed*: The word * which is translated [*Instructed*] is derived from that word * which signifies *Mystery*; and it is as much as if he had said, I have learned the mystery of this business. Contentment is to be learned as a great mysterie; and those that are throughly trained up in that art, have learned a deep *Mystery*; The which is, as *Samsons* riddle to a natural man. [*I have learned it.*] It is not now to learn; neither had I it at first; I have attained it though with much a do, and now by the grace of God I am become master of this Art.

μεμύημαι. μυστήριον.

In whatsoever state I am.] The word [*State*] is not in the Original, but, * *In what I am*, that is, in whatsoever concerns or befals me, whether I have little or nothing at all.

ἐν οἷς εἰμι

Therewith to be content.] The word which we render *Content* here, hath in the Original much elegancy and fulness of signification in it. In strictness of phrase it is only attributed unto God, who hath stiled himself *God all-sufficient*, as resting wholly satisfied in and with himself alone; but he is pleased freely to communicate of his fulness to the creature, so that from God in Christ the Saints *receive grace for grace*, *Joh.* 1. 16. in so much that there is in them an answerableness of the same grace in their proportion that is in Christ. And in this sence *Paul* saith, I have a *Self-sufficiency*, as the word notes.

αὐτάρκεια, εἶναι.

But hath *Paul* a self-sufficiency you will say? How are we sufficient of our selves? Our Apostle affirms in another case, *That we are not sufficient of our selves to think any thing as of our selves*? 2 *Cor.* 3. 5. His meaning therfore must be, I find a sufficiency of

of satisfaction in my own heart, through the Grace of Christ that is in me; though I have not outward comforts and worldly accommodations to supply my necessities, yet I enjoy portion enough betwixt Christ and my own soul abundantly to satisfie me in every condition. And this interpretation is sutable to that place, *Pro.* 14.14. *A good man is satisfied from himself*, and agreeable to what he verifies of himself in another place; that *though he had nothing yet he possessed all things*; because he had right to the covenant and promise, which virtually contains all, and an interest in Christ the fountain and good of all, and having that, no marvaill he saith that in whatsoever state he was in, he was content. Thus you have the genuine interpretation of the text. I shal not make any division of the words, because I take them only to prosecute that *one duty* most necessary, *viz.* The quieting and comforting the hearts of Gods people under the troubles and changes they meet withall, in these heart-shaking times, And the doctrinal conclusion is in brief this.

Doct. *That to be well skill'd in the mystery of Christian Contentment is the Duty, Glory, and Excellency of a Christian.*

This Evangelical truth is held forth sufficiently in Scripture; yet take one or two paralel places more for the confirmation of it. 1. *Tim.* 6. 6, & 8. you have both the duty expresst, and the glory thereof: *Having food and raiment* (saith he vers. 8.) *let us be therewith content*, there is the duty; *But godliness with Contentment is great gain*, vers. 6. there is the glory and excellency of it: as if godlinesse were not gain except there were Contentment withal. The like exhortation you have in *Heb.* 13. 5. *Let your conversation be without Covetousness, and be content with such things as you have.* I do not find any Apostle or Writer of Scripture treat so much of this spiritual mystery of Contentment as this our Apostle hath done throughout his Epistles.

For the cleer opening and proving of this practical conclusion, I shall indeavor to demonstrate these four things;

First, The nature of this Christian Contentment, what it is.

Secondly, The art and mystery of it.

Thirdly, What those lessons are that must be learn'd to work the heart to contentment.

Fourthly, Wherein the glorious excellencies of this grace doth principally consist.

Concerning the first, take this description; *Christian Contentment is that sweet, inward, quiet, gracious frame of spirit, freely submitting to, and taking complacency in God's wise, and fatherly disposal in every condition.*

I shall break open this description, for it is a box of precious Ointment, very comfortable and useful for troubled hearts, in troubled times and conditions.

First, *Contentment* (I say) *is a sweet [inward] heart-thing, it is a work of the spirit within doors*: It is not only a not-seeking help to our selves by outward violence, or a forbearance of discontented murmuring expressions, in froward words and carriages against God or others; but it is the inward submission of the heart. *Psal.* 62. 1. *Truly, my soul waiteth upon God*; *and ver.* 5. *My soul wait thou only upon God*, so it is in your Book; but the words may be translated as rightly, *My soul be thou silent unto God*; *Hold thy peace O my soul*: Not only the tongue must hold it's peace, but the soul must be silent: Many may sit down silently, forbearing discontented expressions, yet are inwardly swollen with discontentment; now this manifesteth a perplexed distemper and a great frowardnesse in their hearts: And God notwithstanding their outward silence hears the peevish fretting language of their souls. The show may be smooth and neat without, whilst the flesh is pinched within: There may be much calmnesse and stilnesse outwardly, and yet wonderful confusion, bitternesse, disturbance and vexation within. Some are so weak that they are not able to contain the disquietnes of their own spirits, but in words and behaviour discover what woful perturbations there are within, their spirits being like the raging Sea casting forth nothing but mire and dirt, being not only troublesome to themselves but to all those they live with: Others there are who are able to keep in such distempers of heart, (as *Judas* did when he betrayed Christ with a kisse,) but still they boyl inwardly and eat like a Canker: As *David* speaks concerning som whose words are smoother

ther than hony, and butter, and yet have war in their hearts; and as he saith in another place, whilst *I kept silence my bones waxed old*; so these, whilst there is a serene calme upon their tongues, have yet blustring storms in their spirits, and whilst they keep silence, their hearts are troubled, and even worn away with anguish and vexation; they have peace and quiet outwardly, but war from the unruly and turbulent workings of their hearts, that is within. If the attainment to true Contentment were as easie as keeping quiet outwardly, there need be no great learning of it; it might be had with lesse skill and strength than an Apostle had; yea than an ordinary Christian hath or may have. Therefore certainly there is a great deal more in it than can be attained by common gifts, and ordinary power of reason, which often bridles in nature. It is a heart-businesse.

Secondly, *It is the [quiet] of the heart*; All is sedate and still there, and to understand this the better; This quiet gracious frame of spirit. It is not opposed.

1. *To a due sence of affliction.* God doth give leave to his people to be sensible of what they suffer: Christ doth not say. Do not count that a crosse which is a crosse, but take up your crosse daily. As it is in the body natural, if the body takes Physick and is not able to bear it but presently vomits it up, or if it be not at all sensible, if it stir not the body; either of these waies the physick doth no good, but argues the body much distempered and will hardly be cured. So it is with the spirits of men under afflictions; if either they cannot bear Gods potions but cast them up again or are not sensible of them, and their souls are no more stir'd by them than the body is by a draught of smal beer, it is a sad symptome that their souls are in a dangerous and almost incurable condition. So that this inward quietnesse is not in opposition to the sence of affliction; for indeed there were no true Contentment if you were not apprehensive and sensible of your afflictions when God is angry. It is not opposed.

2. *To an orderly making our moan and complaint to God, and to our friends.* Though a Christian ought to be quiet under Gods correcting hand, yet he may without any breach of Christian

Contentment

contentment complain to God; (as one of the Ancients saith) though not with a tumultuous clamour and shreeking out in a perplexed passion, yet in a quiet still submissive way he may unbosom his heart unto God. And likewise communicate his sad condition to his gracious friends, shewing them how God hath dealt with him and how heavy the affliction is upon him, that they may speak a word in due season to his wearied soul. It is not opposed.

2. *To all lawful seeking out for help into another condition, or simply endeavoring to be delivered out of the present affliction by the use of lawful means.* No, I may say in provision for my deliverance, & use Gods means, waiting on him, because I know not but that it may be his will to alter my condition, and so far as he leads me I may follow his providence, it is but my duty. God is thus far mercifully indulgent to our weakness, and he will not take it il at our hands if by earnest and importunate prayer we seek unto him for deliverance, till we know his good pleasure therein. And certainly thus seeking for help with such a submission and holy resignation of spirit to be delivered when God will and as God wil, and how God will, so that our wills are melted into the will of God, this is no opposition to the quietness which God requires in a contented spirit.

Quest. But then, what is this quietness of spirit opposed unto?

Ans. *To murmuring and repining at the hand of God; as the discontented Israelites often did,* which if we our selves cannot endure either in our children or servants much Less can God bear it in us.

2. *To vexing and fretting*; which is a degree beyond murmuring. It is a speech I remember of an Heathen, A wise man may greive under, but not be vexed with his afflictions. There is a vast difference betwixt a kindly grieving and a distempered vexation.

3. *To tumultuousness of spirit*: When the thoughts run distractingly and work in a confused manner, so that the affections are like the unruly multitude in the *Acts*, who knew not for what end they were come together. The Lord expects that you should be silent under his rod, and as he said in *Act.* 19. 36. *You ought*

ought to be quiet and to do nothing rashly.

4. *To unsetledness and unfixedness of spirit, whereby the heart is taken off from the present duty that God requires in our several relations, both towards God, our selves, and others.* We should prize duty at a higher rate than to be taken off by every trivial occasion; a Christian indeed values every service of God so much, that though some may be in the eye of the world and of natural reason, a slight emptie business, beggerly rudiments, foolishness, yet seeing God calls for it, the authority of the command doth so over awe his heart, that he is willing to spend himself and to be spent in the discharge of it. It is an expression of *Luthers*, ordinary works that are done in faith, and from faith, are more precious than Heaven and earth. And if this be so, and a Christian know it, it is not a little matter that should divert him: but he should answer every avocation, and resist every tentation, as *Nehemiah* did chap. 6. 3. *Sanballat, Geshem, and Tobiah* (when they would have hindred the building of the wall with this, *I am doing a great work* (saith he) *so that I cannot come down, why should the work of the Lord cease?*

5. *To distracting, heart eating cares and fears.* A gracious heart so estimates it's union with Christ and the work that God sets it about, as it will not willingly suffer any thing to come in to choak it, or dead it. A Christian is desirous that the Word of God should take such full possession as to divide between soul and spirit, but he would not suffer the fear and noise of evil tidings to take such impression in his soul, as to make a division and strugling there, like the twins in *Rebeckah's* womb. A great man will permit common people to stand without his doors, but he will not let them come in and make a noise in his closet or bed-chamber, when he purposely retires himself from all worldly imployments. So a well tempered spirit though it may inquire after things abroad without doors in the world, and suffer some ordinary cares and fears to break in to the suburbs of the soul, so as to have a light touch upon the thoughts: Yet it will not upon any terms admit of an intrusion into the privy-chamber, which should be wholly reserved for Jesus Christ as his inward Temple.

6. *To sinking discouragements.* When things fall not out according

cording to expectation, when the tyde of second causes runs so low that we see little left in the outward means to bear up our hopes and hearts. That then the heart begins to reason as he in the *Kings*, *If the Lord should open the windows of Heaven how should this be?* Never considering that God can open the eyes of the blind with clay and spittle, he can work above, beyond, nay contrary to means; he often makes the fairest flowers of mans endeavors to wither, and brings improbable things to pass, that the glory of interprizes may be given to himself. Nay if his people stand in need of miracles to work their deliverance, miracles falls as easily out of Gods hands, as to give his people daily bread. Gods blessing is many times secret upon his servants that they know not which way it comes; as 2 *Kings*, 3. 17. *Ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain, yet the valley shall be filled with water*, God would have us depend on him though we do not see means how the thing should be brought to pass, else we do not shew a quiet spirit; though an affliction be upon thee, let not thy heart sink under it. So far as thy heart sinks and thou art discouraged under thy affliction, so much thou wantest of this lesson of Contentment.

7. *To sinful shiftings, and shirkings out for ease and help.* As we see in *Saul* turning to the witch of Endor, and his offering sacrifice before *Samuel* came: Nay the good King *Jehoshaphat* joyns himself with *Ahaziah* 2 *Chron.* 20. *Ult.* *And* Asa *goes to* Benhadad *King of Assyria for help, not relying upon the Lord*, (2 *Chr.* 16. 7, 8.) Though the Lord had delivered the Ethiopian Army into his hands, consisting of a thousand thousand, 2 *Chro.* 14. 11. And good *Jacob* joyned in a lye with his mother to *Isaac*, he was not content to stay Gods time, and use Gods means, but made too great hast and stept out of his way, to procure the blessing which God intended for him: as many do through the corruption of their hearts and weakness of their faith, because they are not able to trust God, and follow him fully in all things and all waies; and for this cause the Lord often follows the Saints with many sore temporal crosses, (as we see in *Jacob*) though they obtain the mercy. It may be thy wretched carnal heart thinks, I care not how I be

delivered

delivered, so I may but get free from it: Is it not so many times in some of your hearts when any crosse of affliction befals you? Have not you such kind of workings of spirit as this; Oh that I could but be delivered out of this affliction any way, I would not care; your hearts are far from being quiet. And this sinful shifting is the next thing in opposition to this quietnesse, which God requires in a contented spirit.

The Eighth and last thing that this quietnes of Spirit is opposite to, is *desperate risings of heart against God in a way of rebellion:* That is most abominable, I hope many of you have learned so far to be content, as to keep down your hearts from such distempers; and yet the truth is, not only wicked men, but sometimes the very Saints of God find the beginnings of this, when an affliction lies long, and is very sore and heavy upon them indeed, and strikes them as it were in the master vein, they find somewhat of this in their hearts, arising against God, their thoughts begin to bubble, and their affections begin to stir in rising against God himself; especially such as together with their corruptions have much melancholly, and the Devil working both upon the corruptions of their hearts, and the melancholly distemper of their bodies; though there may lie much grace at the bottom, yet there maybe some risings against God himself under affliction. Now Christian quietnes is opposite to all these things: that is, When afflictions come, be it what affliction it will be, yet you do not murmur, though you be sensible, though you make your moan, though you desire to be delivered, and seek it by all good meanes, yet you do not murmur nor repine, you do not fret nor vex, there is not that tumultuousnesse of spirit in you, there is not unsetledness in your spirits, there are not distracting fears in your hearts, no sinking discouragements, no base shiftings, no rising in rebellion any way against God: This is the quietnesse of Spirit under an affliction; and that is the Second thing when the soul is so far able to bear an affliction as to keep quiet under it.

Now the Third thing I would open in the description is this, *It is an inward quiet, gracious [frame] of Spirit.* It is a frame of Spirit, and then a gracious frame of Spirit. Contentment it is a Soul businesse, First, It is inward; Se-

condly quiet; Thirdly it is a quiet *Frame* of Spirit. [*Frame*] by that I mean these Three things: There are Three things considerable when I say, Contentment consists in the quiet *frame* of the Spirit of a man.

First, *That it is grace that spreads it self through the whol Soul:* as thus, It is in the judgment, that is, The judgment of the soul of a man or woman tends to quiet the heart; In my judgment I am satisfied, that is one thing to be satisfied in ones understanding and judgment, as thus, This is the hand of God; and this is that that is sutable to my condition, or best for me; although I do not see the reason of the thing, yet I am satisfied in my judgment about it.

And then, *it is in the thoughts of a man or woman*: As my judgment is satisfied, so my thoughts are kept in order.

And then it comes to the *will, My will yeilds and submits to it, my affections are all likewise kept in order, so that it goes through the whol soul.* There is in some a partial Contentment, and so 'tis not the frame of the soul, but some part of the soul hath some Contentment, as thus, Many a man may be satisfied in his judgment about a thing, and yet cannot for his life rule his affections, nor his thoughts; cannot rule his thoughts, nor the will, nor the affections though the judgment be satisfied: I make no question but many of you may know this by your own experience, if you do but observe the workings of your own hearts. Cannot you say when such an affliction befals you, I can bless God I am satisfied in my judgment about it, I have nothing in the world to say in respect of my judgment against it, I see the hand of God and I should be content: yea I am satisfied in my judgment, that my condition is a good condition in which I am; but I cannot for my life rule my thoughts, my will, and my affections, me thinks I feel my heart heavy, and sad, and troubled more than it should be, and yet my judgment is satisfied. This seem'd to be the case of *David, Psal. 43. Oh my Soul why art thou disquieted? David* as far as his judgment went, there was a contentedness, that is, His judgment was satisfied in the work of God upon him; and he was troubled, but he knew not wherefore, *O my soul why art thou cast down within me?* That Psalm is a very good Psalm for those that feel a fretting, discon-

tented

tended distemper in their hearts at any time, for them to be reading or singing: he hath it once or twice in that *Psalm, Why art thou cast down O my soul?* In verſ. 5. *And why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God for I shall yet praise him, for the help of his countenance. David* had enough to quiet him, and that that he had had prevailed with his judgment, but after it had prevailed with his judgment he could not get it further. He could not get this grace of Contentment to go through the whole frame of the Soul. There is a great deal of stir sometimes to get Contentment into their judgments, that is, To satisfie their iudgments about their condition: Come to many, that the hand of God is upon perhaps in a grievous manner, and seek to satisfie them, and tel them that there is no such cause to be disquieted, O not such cause saith the troubled spirit O then there is no cause that any should be disquieted; there was never any such affliction as I have! and a hundred things they have to put off what is said to them, so as you cannot so much as get into their judgments to satisfie them; but there is a great deal of hope of Contentment if once your judgments come to be satisfied, that you can sit down and say in your judgments, I see cause to be contented; but though you have gotten thus far, yet you may have much to do with your hearts afterward: for there is such unrulinesse in our thoughts and affections, that our judgments are not able alwaies to rule our thoughts and affections, and that makes me to say, That Contentment is an inward, quiet, gracious frame of Spirit, that is, the whol Soul, Judgment, Thoughts, Will, Affections and all are satisfied and quiet. I suppose in the very opening this, you begin to see it is a lesson that you had need learn, and it is not a thing soon got, if Contentment be such a thing as this is.

The Second thing is this, which is very observable, *That spiritual contentment comes from the frame of the Soul.* A man or woman that is contented in a right way, their Contentment doth not so much come from outward arguments, or any outward thing that helps them to be content, as it doth from the disposition of their own hearts; It is the disposition of their own hearts that causes this Contentment; that brings forth this gracious Contentment rather than any external thing that

doth it; as thus I would open my self, one that is disquieted, suppose a child, or man, or woman if you come and bring them some great matter to please them, that perhaps will quiet them, and they will be contented; it is the thing you bring them that quiets them, but it is not the disposition of their own spirits, not from any good temper that there is in their own hearts: but from some external thing that is brought them: but when a Christian is contented in a right way, the quiet doth come more from the inward temper and disposition of their own hearts than from any external arguments, or possession of any thing in the world. I would yet open this further to you in this Similitude. The being content upon some external thing, it is like the warming of a mans cloaths by the fire; but being content by the inward disposition of the soul, it is like the warmth that a mans cloaths hath from the natural heat of his body: A man that is of a healthful body, he puts on his cloaths, and perhaps when he puts them on at the first in a cold morning he feels his cloaths cold, but after he hath them on a little while, they are warm; why how come they warm? they come not nigh the fire: No, but it came from the natural heat of his body. Now a sickly man that hath his natural heat decayed, if he put on his cloaths cold, they will not be hot in a long time, but he must have them warmed by the fire, and then they will quickly be cold again; So this will difference the Contentments of men. There are some men now that are very gracious, and when an affliction comes upon them, indeed at first it seems to be a little cold, but after it hath been on a while, the very temper of their hearts being gracious it makes their afflictions easy, and makes them to be quiet under it, and not to complain of any discontentment. But now you shall have others that have an affliction upon them, that have not this good temper in their hearts, their afflictions are very cold upon them and grievous; and it may be if you bring them some external arguments, somwhat from without, as the fire that warms the cloaths, perhaps they will be quiet for a while; but alas, wanting a gracious disposition within in their own hearts that warmth will not hold long. The warmth of the fire, that is, a Contentment that comes meerly from external arguments will not hold

long,

long, but that holds that doth come from the gracious temper of the Spirit. It is from the frame and the disposition of the spirit of a man or woman. there's the true Contentment. But this we shall speak to further in the opening of the *Mystery of Contentment*,

The Third thing is this, *It is the frame of Spirit, that shews the habitualneß of this grace of Contentment.* Contentment is not meerly one act, a flash in a good mood; you shall have many men and women, that take them in some good mood and they will be very quiet; but this will not hold, this is not in a constant way, there is not a constant tenour of their spirits to be holy and gracious under affliction: But I say, It is the quiet frame of spirit, by that I mean, The habitual disposition of their Souls, that it is not only at this time, and the other time when you take men and women in a good mood. but it is the constant tenour and temper of the heart; that is a Christian that hath learned this lesson of Contentment, that in the constant tenour and temper of heart is contented, and can carry its self quietly in a constant way, or else it is worth nothing; for there is no body that is so furious in their discontent, but will be quiet in some good mood or other. Now First it is a heart-business; Secondly, it is the heart quiet; and then Thirdly, it is the frame of the heart.

But Fourthly, *It is the* [*gracious*] *frame of the heart.* Indeed in Contentment there is a composition of all graces if the Contentment be Spiritual, if it be truly Christian, there is I say a composition of all Spiritual graces; As it is in some Oyls, there is a composition of a great many very precious Ingredients: so in this grace of Contentment, which we shall yet further speak of in the opening of the Excellency of it. But now the gracious frame of Spirit is in opposition to Three things;

1 First, *In opposition to the natural stilneß that there is in many men and women.* There is some of such a natural constitution that makes them to be more still and more quiet than others: others are of a violent and hot constitution, and they are more impatient than others.

2 Secondly, *In opposition to a sturdy resolution.* As some men through the strength of some sturdy resolution, they have not seemed

seemed to be troubled let come what will come; and so it may be through a sturdy resolution at some times they are not so much disquieted as others are.

Thirdly, *In way of distinction, from the very strength of reason* (though not sanctified) *the strength of natural reason may quiet the heart in some measure.* But now I say, A gracious frame of spirit is not a meer stilness of body through a natural constitution and temper, nor sturdinesse of resolution, nor meerly through the strength of reason.

You will say, wherein is this graciousness of Contentment distinguisht from all these? More of this will be spoken to when we shew the mystery of it, and the lessons that are learned, but now we may speak a little by way of distinction here; as now, From the natural stilnesse of mens spirits, many men and women have such a natural stilnesse of spirit, and constitution of body, that you shall find them seldom disquieted. But now mark these kind of people that are so, they likewise are very dull, of a dull spirit in any good thing, they have no quickness, nor livelinesse of spirit in that which is good; but now mark where Contentment of heart is gracious, the heart is very quick and lively in the service of God, yea the more any gracious heart can bring its self to be in a contented disposition Oh the more fit it is for any service of God, and is very active and lively in Gods service, not dull in the service of God: And as a Contented heart is very active and stirring in the work of God, so he is very active and stirring in sanctifying Gods Name in the affliction that doth befall him: The difference will appear very cleer thus, One that is of a still disposition, he is not disquieted indeed as others, neither hath he any activeness of spirit in sanctifying the Name of God in the affliction: but now one that is content in a gracious way as he is not disquieted, but keeps his heart quiet in respect of vexing and trouble, so on the other side he is not dull nor heavy but is very active to sanctifie Gods Name in the affliction that is upon him, for it is not enough meerly not to murmur, not to be discontented and troubled, but you must be active in the sanctifying Gods Name in the affliction. And indeed this will distinguish it from the other, from a sturdy resolution, I will

will not be troubled: but though you have a ſturdy reſolution that you will not be troubled, is there a conſcionableneſs in you to ſanctifie Gods Name in your affliction, and doth it come from thence? That is the main thing that brings the quiet of heart, and helps againſt diſcontentedneſs in a gracious heart. I ſay the deſire and care that thy ſoul hath to ſanctifie Gods Name in an affliction, it is that that quiets the ſoul, which doth not in the other. Neither when it is meerly from reaſon: As *Socrates* it is ſaid of him (though he were but an heathen) that what ever befel him he would never ſo much as change his countenance, and he got this power over his ſpirit meerly by ſtrength of reaſon and morallity: but now this gracious Contentment comes from principles beyound the ſtrength of reaſon. I cannot open that (from whence it comes) till we come to open the Myſterie of ſpiritual Contentment. I will only give you this one note of difference between a man and a woman that is contented in a natural way, and another that is contented in a ſpiritual way. Thoſe that are contented in a natural way, they overcome themſelves when outward afflictions doth befal them, they are contented, yea and they are contented as well when they commit ſin againſt God, either when they have outward croſſes or when God is diſhonored it is all one, either when themſelves are croſt or when God is croſt; but now a gracious heart that is contented with its own affliction, yet mightily riſes when God is diſhonored.

The Fift is [*Freely*] *freely ſubmitting to, and taking complacency in Gods diſpoſe*, it is a free work of the ſpirit: now there are four things to be opened in this freedom of ſpirit.

Firſt, that the heart is readily brought over, that which one doth freely there is no great ſtir to bring them to it; there are many men and women when their afflictions are grievous upon them, with much a do they are brought to be contented, a great deal of ſtir there is to quiet their hearts when they are under affliction, yet at laſt perhaps they are brought to it, I but now this doth not come off freely: if I deſire a thing of another and I get it perhaps with much ado, and a great deal of ſtir there is, but here's no freedom of ſpirit; but when a man is free in a thing do but mention it and preſently he comes off to

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it. So if you have learned this art of Contentment, you will not only be contented after a great deal of do to quiet your hearts, but readily as soon as ever you do come to think that it is the hand of God, your heart presently closeth.

Secondly, *freely*, *That is not by constraint*, not patience by force (as we use to say.) As many will say that you must be content, this is the hand of God and there is no help for it; O this is too low an expression for Christians, yet when Christians come to visit one another, they say friend or neighbour you must be content, this is too low an expression for a Christian, *Must be content*, no, readily, and freely a will be content. It is suitable to my heart to yield to God, and to be content, I find it is a thing that comes off of it self, that my soul will be content. Oh you should answer your friends so that come and tell you you must be content, nay I am willing to yield to God, and I am freely content, that's the Second. And then a free act it comes after a rational way, that's freedom, that is, it doth not come through ignorance, because I know no better condition, or that I know not what my affliction is, I but it comes through a sanctified judgment, for that is the reason that no creature can do an act of freedom, but the rational creature, the liberty of action is only in rational creatures, and it comes from hence, for that's only freedom and out of liberty that's wrought in a rational way, as a natural freedom is when I by my judgment see what is to be done, understand the thing, and then there is a closing with what I do understand in my judgment, that is freely done; but now if a man doth a thing, and understands not what he doth, he cannot be said to do it freely. So if men are contented, but it is because they understand not what their affliction is, or because they understand no better, this is not freely: as for instance, Suppose a Child born in a prison and never in all his life went out, the Child is contented, why? Because he never knew better, but this is no free act of Contentation. But now for men and women that do know better, that know that the condition in which they are in it is an afflicted condition, and a sad condition, and yet they can bring their hearts to a Contentation out of a sanctified judgment, this is freedom.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, *This freedom it is in opposition to stupidnesse*, for a man and woman may be contented meerly out of want of sence, this is not free, as a man in a dead palsey that doth no feel you nip his flesh, he is not freely patient; but if one should have their flesh nipt, and feel it, and yet for all that can be able to bridle themselves, and do it freely, that is another matter. So it is here, many are contented meerly out of stupidnesse, they have a dead palsie upon them; but now a gracious heart hath sence enough, and yet is contented, and therefore is free.

Sixthly, *Freely* [*submitting*] *to, and taking complacency in Gods dispose.* Submitting to Gods dispose, What is that? The word *Submit*, it signifies nothing else, but to send under; as thus, One that is discontented, the heart will be unruly, and would even get above God so far as discontentment prevails; but now comes the grace of Contentment and sends it under; to submit, it is to send under a thing; now when the soul comes to see the unruliness that there is in it, here's the hand of God that brings an affliction, and my heart is troubled and discontented; what saith the Soul? Wilt thou be above God? Is it not Gods hand, and must thy will be regarded more then Gods? O under, under O thou soul get under, keep under, keep low, keep under Gods feet; thou art under Gods feet, and keep under his feet, keep under the Authority of God, the Majestie of God, the Soveraignity of God, the Power that God hath over thee: Keep under, that is to submit; then the Soul can submit to God when it can send its self under the Power and Authoritie, and Soveraignitie, and Dominion that God hath over it; that is the Sixth Particular: Yea but that is not enough, yet you have not got to this Grace of Contentment, except in the next place you take.

Seventhly, *Taking a* [*complacency*] *in Gods dispose.* That is thus, I am well pleased in what God doth, so far as I can see God in it, though (as I sayd) I may be sensible of the affliction, and may desire that God in his due time would take it off, and use means to take it off; yet I may be well pleased so far as Gods hand is in it. To be well pleased with Gods hand, that is a higher degree than the other: and this comes from hence, not only because I see that I should be content in this affliction, but

because I see that there is good in this affliction. I find there is honey in this rock, and so I do not only say, I *must*, or I *will* submit to Gods hand: no, but the hand of God is *good*; it is *good that I am afflicted*. That it is just that I am afflicted, that may be in one that is not truly contented, I may be convinced that God deals justly in this, God is righteous and just, and 'tis fit I should submit to what he hath done, O the Lord hath done righteously in al his waies but that is not enough, but thou must say Good is the hand of the Lord, the expression of old *Ely*, *Good is the Word of the Lord*, when it was a sore and hard word, that word that did threaten very grievous things to *Ely* and his house, and yet, Good is the word of the Lord, saith *Ely*. Perhaps some of you may say as *David*, It is good that I was afflicted; nay, you must come to say thus *It is good that I am afflicted*. Not good when you see the good fruit that it hath wrought, but when you are afflicted to say, It is good that I am afflicted. Whatever the affliction be, yet through the mercie of God my condition is a good condition; it is the top indeed, and the height of this art of Contentment to come to this pitch, to be able to say Well, my condition and afflictions are thus and thus, and is very grievous and sore, yet I am through Gods mercie in a good condition, and the hand of God is good upon me not withstanding. Now I should have given you divers Scriptures about this, I shall but give you one or two that are very remarkable; you will think this is a hard lesson to come thus far, not only to be quiet, but to have a complacencie in affliction. *Prov.* 16.6. *In the house of the righteous is much treasure, but in the revenues of the wicked is trouble.* Here's a Scripture now that will shew that a gracious heart hath cause to say, it is in a good condition what ever it be. In the house of the Righteous is much Treasure, his house, what house? it may be a poor Cottage, perhaps he hath scarce a stool to sit on; perhaps he is fain to sit upon a stump of wood, a piece of a block instead of a stool; or perhaps he hath scarce a bed to lie upon, or a dish to eat in; yet saith the holy Ghost, In the house of the righteous is much treasure: Let the righteous man be the poorest man in the world: It may be there are some that have come and taken all the goods out of his house for debt; perhaps his house is plundered and

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all is gone, yet ſtill, *In the houſe of the righteous is much treaſure*; the righteous man can never be brought to be ſo poor, to have his houſe rifled and ſpoild, but there will remain much treaſure within, if he hath but a diſh or a ſpoon or any thing in the world in his houſe, there will be much treaſure; ſo long as he is there, there is the preſence of God and the bleſſing of God upon him, and therein is much treaſure; but in the revenues of the wicked there is trouble: There is more treaſure in the pooreſt bodies houſe, If he be godly, than in the houſe of the greateſt man in the world, that hath his brave hangings, and brave wrought beds, and chairs, and couches, and cupbords of plate, and the like; what ever he hath, he hath not ſo much treaſure in it, as in the houſe of the pooreſt righteous ſoul; therefore in a verſe or two after my text, no marvail though *Paul* (ſaith he) was Content, you ſhall ſee in *Phil.* 4.18. *But I have all, and abound, I am full.* I have all: Alas poor man what had *Paul* that could make him ſay he had all, where was there ever man more afflicted than *Paul* was? many times he had not tatters to hang about his body, to cover his nakedneſſe, he had not bread to eat, he was often in nakedneſſe, and put in the ſtocks, and whipt and cruelly uſed, *yet I have all* (ſaith *Paul*) for all that. Yea you ſhall have it in 2. *Cor.* 6. 10. he profeſſes there, *That he did poſſeſs all things, as ſorrowful, yet alwaies rejoycing, as poor, yet making many rich, as having nothing, and yet poſſeſſing all things*, but marke what he ſaith, it is, *As having nothing*, but it is *Poſſeſſing all things*. He doth not ſay, as poſſeſſing all things, but poſſeſſing all things; it is very little I have in the world, but yet poſſeſſing all things: So that you ſee a Chriſtian hath cauſe to take complacency in Gods hand, whatſoever his hand be.

The Eight thing in Contentment it is [*In Gods diſpoſe*] *Submitting to and taking complacency in Gods diſpoſe.* That is, the ſoul that hath learned this leſſon of Contentment, looks up to God in all things; looks not down to the inſtruments or the means, as ſuch a man did it, and it was unreaſonableneſs of ſuch and ſuch inſtruments, and the like barbarous uſage of ſuch and ſuch; but looks up to God; a contented heart looks to Gods diſpoſe, and ſubmits to Gods diſpoſe, that is, ſees the wiſdom of

God in all, in his submission sees his soveraignity, but that that makes him take complacency, it is Gods wisdom; the Lord knows how to order things better than I, the Lord sees further than I do, I sees things but at present, but the Lord sees a great while hence, and how do I know but had it not been for this affliction, I had been undone? I know that the love of God *may as well stand with an afflicted estate, as with a prosperous estate*; and such kind of reasonings there are in a contented spirit, submitting unto the dispose of God.

The last thing is, *That is in* [*every condition,*] It may be in some things you could be content: You shall have many will say, if my affliction were but as the affliction of such a one I could be content, yea but it must be in the present affliction that is upon you. We use to say, There is a great deal of deceit in Universals; in the general, come to any man or woman and say, Will not you be content with Gods dispose? Yes say they God forbid but we should submit to Gods hand what ever it be; you say that in the general, it is an easie matter to learn this lesson, but when it comes to the particular, when the crosse comes sore indeed, when it strikes you in the heaviest crosse that you think could befal you, what saith your heart now? Can you in every condition be content not only for the matter, but for the time, that is to be in such a condition so long as God would have you, to be content to be at Gods time in that condition, to have such an affliction so long as God would have the affliction abide upon you, to be willing to stay and not to come out of the affliction no sooner than the Lord would have you come out of it? you are not content in your condition else; to be content meerly that I have such a hand of God upon me, and not to stay under the hand of God, that is not to be content under every condition, but when I can find my heart submitting to Gods dispose in such particular afflictions that are very hard, and very grievous, and yet my heart is quiet, here is one that hath learned the lesson of Contentment: Contentment, it is the inward, quiet, gracious frame of spirit, freely submitting to and taking complacency in Gods dispose in every condition: That is the description. Now in this there hath been Nine several things opened.

1. First, That Contentment is a heart work within the ſoul. 2. Secondly, It is the quieting of the heart. 3. Thirdly, It is the frame of the ſpirit. 4. Fourthly, It is a gracious frame. 5. Fiftly, It is the free working of this gracious frame. 6. Sixtly, There is in it a ſubmiſſion to God, ſending the ſoul under God. 7. Seventhly, There is a taking complacency in the hand of God, 8. Eightly, All to Gods diſpoſe. 9. Ninthly, In every condition, every condition though never ſo hard, though continue never ſo long: Now theſe of you that have learned to be Content, have learned to attain unto theſe ſeverall things; the very opening of thoſe things I hope may ſo far work upon your hearts as, Firſt, That you may lay your hands upon your hearts upon this that hath been ſaid, the very telling of you what the leſſon is, I ſay may cauſe you to lay your hands upon your hearts, and ſay, Lord I ſee there is more in Chriſtian Contentation than I thought there was, and I have been far from learning this leſſon, I indeed have learned but my A B C in this leſſon of Contentment, I am but in the lower forme in Chriſts ſchool if I am in it at all; but theſe we ſhall ſpeak to more afterward; but the ſpecial thing I aim'd at in the opening of this point, is to ſhew how great a Myſtery there is in Chriſtian Contentment; and how many ſeverall leſſons are to be learned, that we may come to attaine to this Heavenly diſpoſition, that Saint *Paul* did attain to.

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SERMON II. *at* Stepney. Aug. 3. 1645.

PHIL. 4. 11.

For I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

WE have made entrance (you may remember) into the Argument of *Christian Contentment*. And have opened the words, and shewed you what this Christian Contentation is; that it is, The inward, quiet, gracious frame of Spirit, freely submitting to, and taking Complacency in Gods dispose in every condition. And therein came to this last thing, [*In every condition*] Now we shall a little inlarge that, and so proceed:

1 *Submitting to God in what ever Affliction befalls us: for the kind.*

2 *For the time and continuance of the Affliction.*

3 *For the variety and changes of Affliction*: Let them be what they will, yet there must be a submiting to Gods dispose in every condition.

First for the kind, Many men and women will in the generall say, that they must submit to God in affliction; I suppose now if you should come from one end of this Congregation to another, and speak to every soul thus; Would not you submit to Gods dispose, in what ever condition he should dispose of you to; you will say, God forbid it should be otherwise, but we use to say, *There is a great deal of deceit in generals*. In general you would submit to any thing: but what if it be in this and that particular, that is most cross to you. Then any thing but that: we are usually apt to think that any conditon is better than

than the condition that God doth dispose us to, now here is not Contentment; it should not be only to any condition in general, but for the kind of the affliction, if it be that which is most crosse to you. God (it may be) strikes you in your Child, Oh if it had been in my Estate saith one, I should be content; perhaps he striks you in your Match, Oh saith he I had rather have been strucken in my health; and if he had struck you in your health, Oh then if it had been in my trading I would not have cared; but we must not be our own carvers, what particular afflictions God shall dispose us to, there must be Contentment in them.

Secondly, *There must be a submission to God in every affliction, for the time and continuance of the affliction.* it may be saith one I could submit & be content, but this affliction hath been upon me a long time, a quarter of a year, a year, divers years, and I know not how to yeild and submit to it, my patience is even worn and broke: yea it may be it is a spiritual affliction. you could submit to God you say in any outward affliction, but not in a soul affliction, or if it were an affliction upon the soul, trouble upon the heart, if it were the withdrawing of Gods face, yet if this had been but for a little time I could submit; but seeking of God so long a time and yet God doth not appear, Oh how shall I bear this! We must not be our own disposers for the *time* of deliverance no more than the *kind* and *way* of deliverance, and I will giue you a Scripture or two about this; That we are to submit unto God for the time as well as the kind, in the latter end of the 1. Chap. of *Ezek. When I saw it I fel upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake,* (the prophet was cast down upon his face, but how long must he lie upon his face) *And he said unto me, Son of man stand upon thy feet and I will speak unto thee, and the spirit entered into me, when he spake unto me and set me upon my feet.* *Ezekiel* was cast down upon his face, and there he must lie till God bid him stand up, yea and not only so, but till Gods Spirit came into him to enable him to stand up: So when God casts us down, we must be content to lie till God bid us stand up, and Gods Spirit enter into us to enable us to stand up. So you know *Noah* he was put into the Ark, certainly he knew there was much affliction in the Ark, having all

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kind of creatures shut up with him for twelve months together, it was a mighty thing, yet God shutting him up (though the waters were asswaged) *Noah* was not to come out of the Ark til God bid him: So though we be shut up in great afflictions, and we may think there may be this and that and the other means to come out of that affliction, yet till God doth open the door we should be willing to stay; God hath put us in, and God is to bring us out: As we reade in the *Acts* of *Paul*, when they had shut him in Prison and would have sent him out: Nay, saith *Paul*, they shut us in, let them come and fetch us out: So in a holy gracious way should a soul say, Wel, this affliction that I am brought into, it is by the hand of God, and I am content to be here till God brings me out himself. God doth require at our hands, that we should not be willing to come out till he comes and fetches us out. In *Josh.* 4. 10. you have a notable history there that may very well serve our purpose; we reade of the Priests, that the Priests bear the Ark and stood in the middest of Jordan: you know when the children of Israel went into the Land of Canaan they went through the River of Jordan: Now the going through the river Jordan was a very dangerous thing, only God had them to go, they might have been afraid that the water might have come in upon them: but mark, it is said, *The Priests that bear the Ark stood in the middest of Jordan till every thing was finished that the Lord commanded* Joshua *to speak unto the people, according to all that* Moses *commanded* Joshua: *and the people hasted and passed over: and it came to pass when all the people were clean passed over, that the Ark of the Lord passed over, and the Priests in the presence of the people.* Now it was Gods dispose that all the people should pass over first, that they should be safe upon the land, but the Priests they must stand still til all the people be passed over, and then they must have leave to go, but they must stay till God would have them go, stay in all that danger for certainly in reason and sence there was a great deal of danger in staying: for the text saith, the people hasted over, but the Priests they must stay till the people be gone, stay til God cals them out from that place of danger; and so many times it doth prove that God is pleased to dispose of things so that the ministers must stay longer in danger than the people,

ple, and Magistrates and those in publick place, which should make people to be satisfied and contented with a lower condition that God hath put them into: Though your condition be low, yet you are not in that danger that those are in that are in a higher condition; God cals them in publick place to stand longer in the gap & place of danger than other people, but we must be content to stay even in Jordan tel the Lord shall be pleased to cal us out.

And then for the variety of our condition, we must be content with the particular affliction, and the times and all the circumstances about the affliction; for sometimes the circumstances are greater afflictions than the afflictions themselves; And for the variety, if God will exercise us with various afflictions one after another: As that hath been very observable even of late, that many that have been plundered and come away, afterwards have fallen sick and died: They have fled for their lives and afterwards the plague hath come among them, and if not that affliction it may be some other affliction. It is very rare that one affliction comes alone, commonly afflictions are no single things but they come one upon the neck of another: it may be God strikes one in his estate, then in his body, then in his name, wife or child or dear friend, and so it comes in a various way: it is the way of God ordinarily (you may find it by experience) that seldom one affliction comes alone, now this is hard when one affliction follows after another, when there is a variety of afflictions, when there is a mighty change in a condition, up and down, this way, & that way; there indeed is the tryal of a Christian; there must be submission to Gods dispose in them. I remember it is said even of *Cato* that was a Heathen, that no man saw him to be changed though he lived in a time when the Common-wealth was so often changed, yet it is said of him, he was the same though his condition was changed, and he ran through variety of conditions. Oh that it could be said so of many Christians, that though their conditions be changed yet that no body could see *them* changed, they are the same. Look what gracious, sweet, and holy temper they were in before, that they are in still: Thus we are to submit to the dispose of God in every condition.

Obj. But you will say, This that you speak of is good in-

deed if we could attain to it, but is it possible for one to attain to this?

Answer. It is if you get skill in the Art of it; you may attain to it, and it will prove to be no such difficult thing to you neither, if you understand but the mystery of it; as there's many things that men do in their callings, that if a country man comes and sees, he thinks it is a mighty hard thing, and that he should never be able to do it, but that's because he understands not the art of it, there is a turning of the hand so as you may do it with ease. Now that's the business of this exercise, to open unto you the art and mystery of Contentment: What way a Christian comes to Contentment, there is a great Mysterie and art in it, by that that hath been opened to you there wil appear some mystery and art, as that a man should be content with his affliction and yet throughly sensible of his affliction too, to be throughly sensible of an affliction, and to endeavor the removing of it by all lawful means, and yet to be content, there's a mystery in that, how to Joyne these two together to be sensible of an affliction as much as that man or woman that is not content, I am sensible of it as fully as they, and I seek waies to be delivered from it as well as they, and yet still my heart abides content, this is I say a mystery that is very hard to be understood by a carnal heart; but grace doth teach such a mixture, doth teach us how to make a mixture of sorrow and a mixture of joy together; and that makes Contentment, the mingling of joy and sorrow, of gracious joy and gracious sorrow together, grace teaches us how to moderate and to order an affliction so as there shall be a sence of it, and yet for all that Contentment under it.

There are divers things further for the opening of the Mystery of Contentment.

The First Thing therefore is this, *To shew that there is a great mystery in it.* One that is contented in a Christian way it may be said of him that he is the most *contented* man in the world, and yet the most *unsatisfied* man in the world, these two together must needs be mysterious, I say a contented man as he is the most contented so he is the most unsatisfied of any man in the world. You never learned the mystery of contentment except

cept it may be ſaid of you that as you are the moſt contented man ſo you are the moſt unſatisfied man in the world.

You will ſay, how is that? A man that hath learned the art of Contentment is the moſt contented with any low condition that he hath in the world, & yet he cannot be ſatisfied with the injoyment of all the world, and yet he is contented if he hath but a cruſt, but bread and water, that is if God diſpoſes of him for the things of the world to have but bread and water for his preſent condition, he can be ſatisfied with Gods diſpoſe in that, yet if God ſhould give unto him Kingdoms and Empires, all the world to rule, if he ſhould give it him for his portion he would not be ſatisfied with that, here's the myſtery of it, though his heart be ſo inlarged as the injoyment of all the world and ten thouſand worlds cannot ſatisfie him for his portion; yet he hath a heart quieted under Gods diſpoſe, if he gives him but bread and water, to joyn theſe two together this muſt needs be a great art and myſtery. Though he be contented with God in a little, yet thoſe things that would content other men will not content him; The men of the world they ſeek after eſtates, and think if they had thus much, and thus much, they would be content, they aim at no great matters; but if I had (perhaps ſome man thinks) but two or three hundred a yeer, then I ſhould be well enough; If I had but a hundred a yeer, or a thouſand a year (ſaith another) then I ſhould be ſatisfied: but ſaith a gracious heart, If he had ten hundred thouſand times ſo much a year, it would not ſatisfie him, if he had the quinteſcence of all the excellencies of all the creatures in the world, it could not ſatisfie him, and yet this man can ſing, and be merry, and joyful when he hath but a cruſt of bread and a little water in the world: Surely Religion is a great Myſtery, great is the Myſtery of Godlineſs, not only in the Doctrinal part of it, but in the Practical part of it alſo. Godlineſs teacheth us this Myſtery, Not to be ſatisfied with all the world for our portion, and yet to be content with the meaneſt condition in which we are. As *Luther*, when he had great gifts ſent him from Dukes and Princes, he refuſed it, and ſaith he, I did vehemently proteſt God ſhould not put me off ſo; 'tis not that which will content me. A little in the world will content a Chriſtian for his paſ-

ſage: Mark, here lies the Myſtery of it, A little in the world will Content a Chriſtian for his paſſage, but all the world and ten thouſand times more will not Content a Chriſtian for his *portion*: Now a carnal heart will be Content with theſe things of the world for his portion; and there is the difference between a Carnal heart and a Gracious heart: But ſaith a gracious heart, Lord do with me what thou wilt for my paſſage through this world, I will be content with that, but I cannot be content with all the world for my portion: ſo there is the myſtery of true Contentation. A contented man though he be moſt contented with the leaſt things in the world, yet he is the moſt unſatisfied man that lives in the world. That Soul that is capable of God, can be filled with nothing elſe but God; nothing but God can fill a ſoul that is capable of God: though a gracious heart knows that it is capable of God, and was made for God; Carnal hearts think of no reference to God, but a gracious heart being inlarged to be capable of God, and injoying ſomewhat of him, nothing in the world can fill a gracious Heart, it muſt be only God himſelf; and therefore you ſhall obſerve, That let God give what he will to a gracious heart, a heart that is godly, except he gives Himſelf, it will not do; a godly heart will not only have the mercy, but the God of that mercy as well as its ſelf, and then a little matter is enough in the world, ſo be it he hath the God of that mercy he doth injoy; In *Phil.* 4.7.9. I ſhall need go not further to ſhew a notable Scripture for this, Compare verſ. 7. with verſ. 9. *And the peace of God which paſſeth all underſtanding ſhall keep your hearts and minds through Jeſus Chriſt.* The peace of God ſhall keep your hearts. Then in verſ. 9. *Thoſe things which you have both learned and received, and heard and ſeen in me, do; and the God of peace ſhal be with you, The peace of God ſhal keep you and the God of peace ſhal be with you.* This is that that I would obſerve from this Text, That the peace of God is not enough to a gracious heart except it may have the God of that peace. A carnal heart could be ſatisfied if he might but have outward peace, though it be not the peace of God; peace in the State and his trading would ſatisfie him: But mark how a godly heart goes beyound a carnal, al outward peace is not enough, but I muſt have the peace

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of God: But suppose you have the peace of God, Will not that quiet you? No, I must have the God of peace, as the peace of God so the God of peace, that is, I must enjoy that God that gives me the peace, I must have the cause as well as the effect? I must see from whence my peace comes, and enjoy the fountain of my peace, as well as the stream of my peace; and so in other mercies, have I health from God, I must have the God of my health to be my portion, or else I am not satisfied: It is not life, but the God of my life; it is not riches, but the God of those riches that I must have, the God of my preservation, as well as my preservation; a gracious heart is not satisfied without this To have the God of the mercy, as well as the mercy, In *Psal.* 73. 25. *Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none upon the earth that I desire beside thee.* It is nothing in heaven or earth, can satisfie me, but thy self; if God give thee not only earth, but heaven, that thou shouldest rule over Sun, Moon and stars, and have the rule over the highest of the sons of men, it would not be enough to satisfie thee, except thou hadst God himself; There lies the first mystery of Contentment; & truly a contented man, though he be the most contented man in the world, yet he is the most unsatisfied man in the world, that is, Those things that will satisfie the world, will not satisfie him.

Secondly, There is this Mystery in Christian Contentation. *A Christian comes to Contentment, not so much by way of addition, as by way of Substraction*, that is his way of Contentment, and that is a way that the world hath no skill in. I open it thus, Not so much by the adding to what he would have, or to what he hath, not by adding more to his condition, but rather by substracting of his desires, and so to make his desires and condition to be even and equal. A carnal heart knows no way to be Contented but this, I have such and such an estate, and if I had this added to it, and the other comfort added that now I have not, then I should be Contented; it may be I have lost my estate, if I could have but that given to me so as to make up my losse, then I should be a contented man: But now Contentment doth not come in that way, it comes not in I say by the adding to what thou wantest, but by the substracting of thy desires, so is all one to a Christian, either that I may get up unto what I would.

would have, or get my desires down to what I have; either that I may attain to what I do desire, or bring down my desires to what I have already attained; my estate is the same for it is as suitable to me to bring my desire down to my condition, as it is to raise up my condition to my desire. Now I say a heart that hath no grace, and is not instructed in this Mystery of Contentment, knows no way to get contentment, but to have his estate raised up to his desires; but the other hath another way to Contentment, that is, he can bring his desires down to his estate, and so he doth attain to his Contentment. So the Lord fashions the hearts of the Children of men: Now if the heart of a man be fashioned to his condition, he may have as much contentment as if his condition be fashioned to his heart; some men have a mighty large heart, but they have a straight condition, and they can never have Contentment when their hearts are big and their condition is little; but now though a man cannot bring his condition to be as big as his heart, yet if he can bring his heart to be as little as his condition, to bring them even, from thence is Contentment. The world is infinitly deceived in this, To think that Contentment lies in having more than they have; here lies the bottom and root of all Contentment, when there is an evenness and proportion between our hearts and our condition; and that is the reason that many that are godly men that are in a low condition live more sweet and comfortable lives than those that are richer: Contentment is not alwaies cloathed with silk, and purple, and velvets, but Contentment is sometimes in a russet sute, in a mean condition as well as in a higher; and many men that some times have had great estates, and God hath brought them into a lower condition, they have had more Contentment in that condition than the other: Now how can that possible be? Thus easily, For if you did but understand the root of Contentment, it consists in the suitableness and proportion of the spirit of a man to his estate, and the evenness, when one end is not longer and bigger than another: the heart is contented, there is comfort in that condition; now let God give a man never so great riches, yet if the Lord gives him up to the pride of his heart, he will never be contented: But now let God bring any one into

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a mean condition, and then let God but fashion and fute his heart to that condition and he will be content. As now in a mans going. Suppose a man had a mightie long leg, and his other leg were short, why, though one of his legs be longer than ordinarie, yet he could not go so well as a man that hath both his legs shorter than he. I compare a long leg, when one is longer than another, to a man that hath a high condition, and is very rich, and a great man in the world, but he hath a great proud heart too, and that is longer and larger than his condition: now this man cannot but be troubled in his condition: Now another man that is in a mean condition, his condition is low, and his heart is low too; so that his heart and his condition is both even together, and this man goes on with more ease abundantly, than the other doth. So that now a gracious heart works after this manner, The Lord hath been pleased to bring down my condition, now if the Lord bring down my heart and make it even with my condition, then I am well enough: And so when God brings down his condition, he doth not so much labor to raise up his condition again, as to bring down his heart to his condition: The Heathens themselves they had a little glimps of this; they could say, That the best riches that is, it is the poverrie of desires: that is a speech of a Heathen, that is, If a man or woman have their desires cut short, and have no large desires, that man and woman they are rich when they can bring their desires to be but low: So this is the Art of Contentment. Not to seek to add to our conditions, but to substract from our desires. Another hath this, The way to be rich, saith he, it is not by encreasing of wealth, but by diminishing of our desires; for certainly that man or woman is a rich man or woman that hath their desires satisfied; now a contented man hath his desires satisfied, God satisfies his desires, that is, all considered, he is satisfied in his condition for the present to be the best condition, and so he comes to this Contentment by way of Substraction, and not Addition.

The Third thing in the Art of Contentment is this, *A Christian comes to Contentment, not so much by getting off his burden that is upon him, as by the adding another burden to him*: this is a way that flesh and blood hath little skill in. You will say, how is this?

this? In this manner, are thou afflicted, and is there a great load and burden upon thee by reason of thy affliction? thou thinkest there is no way in the world to get Contentment, but, O that this burden were but off, O it is a heavy load, and few know what a burden I have! What doest thou think there is no way for the Contentment of thy spirit but this getting off thy burden? O thou art deceived, the way of Contentment is to ad another burden, that is, labor to load and burden thy heart with thy sin, and the heavyer the burden of thy sin is to thy heart, the lighter will the burden of thy affliction be to thy soul, and so shalt thou come to be content: If thy burden were lightened that would content thee, thou thinkest there is no way to lighten it but to get it off, but thou art deceived, for if thou canst get thy heart to be more burdened with thy sin, thou wilt be less burdened with thy afflictions: You will say this is a strange way, for a man or woman to get ease to their condition when they are burdened, to lay a greater burden upon them? You think there is no other way when you are afflicted, but to be jolly and merry, and get into company, Oh no, you are deceived, your burden will come again, alas this is a poor way to get his spirit quieted, poor man, the burden will be upon him again; but if thou wouldest have thy burden light, if thou canst get alone and examine thy heart for thy sin, and charge thy soul with thy sin; if thy burden be in thy estate, for the abuse of it, or if it be a burden upon thy body, for the abuse of thy health, and strength, and the abuse of any mercies that now the Lord hath taken away from thee, thou hast not honoured God with those mercies that thou hast had, but thou hast walked wickedly and carelessly, and so fall a bemoaning thy sin before the Lord, and thou shalt quickly find the burden of thy affliction to be lighter than it was before; do but try this piece of skill and art, to get your souls contented with any low condition that God puts you into; many times in a family, when any affliction befals them, Oh what a deal of discontentment is there between man and wife, if croft in their estates at Land, or ill news from Sea, or those that they trusted are broke and the like, and perhaps somwhat in the family fals croffe between man and wife, or in reference to the chil-

children or ſervants, and there is nothing but brabling and diſcontent among them, now they many times are burdened with their own diſcontent, and perhaps will ſay one to another, This life is very uncomfortable for us to live thus diſcontented ſo as we do; but have you ever tried this way, the husband and the wife? have you ever got alone and ſaid, Come, O let us go, and humble our ſouls before God together, let us go into our chamber and humble our ſouls before God for our ſin, whereby we have abuſed thoſe mercies that God hath taken away from us and we have provok'd God againſt us, O let us charge our ſelves with our ſin, and be humbled before the Lord together, have you tried ſuch a way as this is? Oh you would find the cloud would be taken away, and the Sun would ſhine in upon you, and you would have a great deal more Contentment than ever yet you had: If a mans eſtate be broken, either by plunderers, or any other way; now how ſhall this man have Contentment? how? By the breaking of his heart; God hath broken thy eſtate, Oh ſeek to him for the breaking of thy heart likewiſe; Indeed a broken eſtate, a whole heart, and a hard heart, will not joyn together, there will be no Contentment; but a broken eſtate, and a broken heart, will ſo ſute together, as there will be more Contentment than there was before; ad therefore to the breaking of thy eſtate, the breaking of thy heart what thou canſt, and that is the way to be contented in a Chriſtian manner, which is the Third Myſtery in Chriſtian Contentation.

The fourth thing is this, *It is not ſo much the removing of the affliction that is upon us, as the changing of the affliction, the Metamorphoſing of the affliction, when it is quite turned and changed into another thing*: I mean in regard of the uſe of it, though for the matter the affliction abide ſtil. The way of Contentment to a carnal heart it's only the removing of the affliction, Oh that it may be gone; no but faith a gracious heart, God hath taught me a way for Contentment though the affliction ſhall continue ſtill for the matter of it, for there is a vertue of grace to turn this affliction into good; it takes away but only the ſting and poyſon of it; As now, Suppoſe poverty, A mans eſtate is loſt; well, is there no way to be contented till your eſtate be made

up again? Till your poverty be removed? Yes, certainly Christianity would teach Contentment, though poverty continues, yet it will teach you how to turn your poverty into spiritual riches; that you shall be poor still for your outward estate; but this shall be altered, whereas before it was once a natural evil to you, it comes now to be turned into a spiritual benefit to you, and so you come to be content. It is a speech of *Ambrose*, Even *poverty it self it is riches unto holy men*: Godly men do make their poverty turn to be riches, they get more riches out of their poverty than ever they got out of the revenues, out of all their trading in this world they never had such incomes as they have had out of their poverty; This a carnal heart will think strange that a man shall make poverty to be the most gainful trade that ever he had in the world; I am perswaded that many Christians have found it so, that they have got more good by their poverty than ever they got by all their riches, you find it in Scripture, therefore think not this strange that I am speaking of, you do not find any one ungodly man that came out of an affliction worse than when he came into it, though for a while he was shaken, yet at last he was better for an affliction; but a great many godly men you find have been worse for their prosperity, scarce one Godly man that you read in Scripture of but was worse for prosperity (except *Daniel* and *Nehemiah*, I do not read of any hurt they got by their prosperity that they had) scarce (I think) is any one example of any godly man but was rather worse for his prosperity than better; for that you see it's no such strange thing, neither to one that is gracious that they shall get good by their affliction: *Luther* hath such an expression in his Comment upon the 5. Chap. of the *Galathians*, in the 17. verse in his Comment upon that place saith, *A Christian becometh a mighty Worker and a wonderfull Creator*, that is (saith he) to create out of heaviness joy, out of terror comfort, out of sin righteousness, out of death life, and brings light out of darkness. It was Gods Prerogative and great Power, his Creating Power to command the light to shine out of darkness; now a Christian is partaker of the Divine Nature, for the Scripture saith, Grace it is part of the Divine Nature, & being part of the Divine Nature it hath an impression of Gods Omnipotent

Power

Power, that is, to create light out of darkneſs, to bring good out of evil, now by this way a Chriſtian comes to be content. God hath given a Chriſtian ſuch a virtue, as can turn afflictions into mercies, can turn darkneſs into light; if a man had the power that Chriſt had when the water pots were fil'd, he could by a word turn the water into wine; if you that have nothing but water to drink, yet if you had a power to turn it into wine then you may be contented: Certainly a Chriſtian hath received this power from God, to work thus miraculouſly; it is the nature of grace to turn water into wine, that is, to turn the water of your affliction, into the wine of Heavenly conſolation. If you underſtand this in a carnal way, I know it will be ridiculous for a Miniſter to ſpeak thus before you, and many carnall people are readie to make ſuch expreſſions as theſe to be ridiculous, underſtanding them in a carnal way: Juſt as *Nicodemus* in the 3. of *John*, *What can a man be born when he is old, can he enter the ſecond time into his mothers womb and be born?* So when we ſpeak of grace that it can turn water into wine, and turn povertie into riches, and make povertie a gainful trade ſaith a carnal heart, Let them have that trade if they will, and let them have water to drink, and ſee if they can turn it into wine: Oh! take heed thou ſpeakeſt not in a ſcornful way of the waies of God; grace hath the power to turn afflictions into mercies. Two men ſhall have one affliction, and to one man it ſhall be as gall and wormwood, and it ſhall be wine, and honey, and delightfulneſs, and joy, and advantage, and riches, to another. This is the myſterie of Contentment, not ſo much by removing the evil, as by metamorphoſing the evill, by changing the evill into good.

The fifth thing is this, *A Chriſtian comes to this Contentment, by making up the wants of his condition, by the performance of the work of his condition.* This is the way of Contentment. There is ſuch a condition that I am in, many wants, I want this and the other comfort, well, how ſhall I come to be ſatisfied and content? A carnal heart thinks this, I muſt have my wants made up or elſe it is impoſſible that I ſhould be content: No, but ſaith a gracious heart, What is the duttie of the condition God hath put me into? Indeed my condition is changed, I was not long

since in a prosperous condition, but God hath changed my condition: the Lord hath called me no more *Naomi*, but *Marah*: Now what am I to do? What can I think now? Are those duties that God requires of me in the condition that he hath now put me into? and let me put forth my strength in the performance of the duties of my present condition. Others they spend their thoughts in those things that shall disturb and disquiet them; and so they grow more and more discontented; yea, but let me spend my thoughts in thinking what my duty is, what is the duty of my present condition which I am in: Oh! saith a man whose condition is changed, and he hath lost his estate, Had I but my estate that I had heretofore, how would I use it to Gods Glory! But God hath made me to see that I did not honor him with my estate as I ought to have done, Oh! had I it again, I would do better than ever I did But this may be but a temptation, therefore you should rather think, What doth God require of me in the condition I am now brought into? And thou shouldest labor to bring thy heart to quiet and Contentment, by setting thy soul on work about the duties of thy present condition; And the truth is, I know nothing more available for the quieting of a Christian soul, and getting Contentment than this, The setting thy heart on work about the duties of thy very present condition that now thou art in, and take heed of thy thoughts about other conditions as a meer temptation. I cannot compare the folly of men and women that think to get Contentment with their musing about other conditions, better than to the way of Children; perhaps they are gotten upon an Hill, and they look a good way off and see another Hill, and they think if they were on the top of that, then they were able to touch the clouds with their fingers; but when they are on the top of that Hill, alas, then they are as far from the clouds, as they were before. So it is with many that think, If they were in such a condition then they should have Contentment; and perhaps they get into that condition, and then they are as far from contentment as before: But then they think if they were in another condition, they would be contented, and then when they have got into that condition, they are still as far from contentment as before. No, no, let me consider what is the duty

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of my preſent condition, and content my heart with this, and ſay, Well, though I am in a low condition, yet I am ſerving the Counſels of God in that condition wherein I am; it is the Counſel of God that hath brought me into this condition that I am in, and I deſire to ſerve the Counſel of God in that condition. There is a notable Scripture concerning *David*. it is ſaid of him, That he ſerved his Generation, after *David* had ſerved his Generation according to the Will of God, then he ſlept. It is a Speech of *Paul* concerning him, in *Act.* 13. 36. So it is in your books, *After he had ſerved his Generation according to the Wil of God*: But now the word that is tranſlated *Will*, it is the *Counſel of God*, and ſo it may be tranſlated as well, *That after* David *in his Generation had ſerved Gods Counſel, then he fell aſleep.* We ordinarily take the words thus, That *David ſerved his Generation*; that is, He did the work of his Generation, that is to ſerve a mans Generation. But it is more plain, if you read it thus After *David* in his Generation had ſerved the Counſel of God, then *David* fel aſleep. O that ſhould be the care of a Chriſtian to ſerve out Gods Counſels. What is the Counſel of God? The condition that I am in, God doth put me into it by his own Counſel, the Counſel of his own Will; Now I muſt ſerve Gods Counſel in my Generation, look what is the Counſel of God in my condition, I muſt look to ſerve that; and ſo I ſhall have my heart quieted for the preſent, and ſhall live and die peaceably, and comfortably, if I be careful to ſerve Gods Counſel.

A ſixth thing in the Myſtery of Contentment is this, *A gracious heart is contented by the melting of his will and deſires into Gods wil and deſires*, by this means he gets Contentment; and this is a Myſterie to a carnal heart. It is not by having his own deſires ſatisfied as before, but by melting his will and deſires into Gods will: So that he comes to have (in one ſenſe) his deſires ſatisfied though he hath not the thing that before he did deſire, yet he comes to be ſatisfied in this, becauſe he makes his will to be all one with Gods will. This is a little higher degree than ſubmitting to the will of God. You all ſay, you ſhould ſubmit to Gods will; but a Chriſtian hath gotten beyond this; that is, he can make Gods will and his to be the ſame: ſo it is ſaid

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of Beleevers, that they are joyned to the Lord, and are one spirit; that is, look what Gods Will is, I do not only see reason to submit to it, but Gods Will is my Will: When the soul can make over (as it were) its Will to God, it must needs then have Contentment. Others would fain get the thing they do desire, O! but saith a gracious heart, that that God would have I would have too; I will not only yeeld to it, but I would have it too; A gracious heart hath learn'd this art, Not only to make the Commanding Will of God to be its own will, that is What God commands me to do, I will do it; but to make the Providential Will of God, and the Operative Will of God to be his will also: God commands this thing, which perhaps you that are Christians may have some skill in, but whatsoever God works, you must will as well as that God commands, you must make Gods Providential Will, and his Operative Will, as well your Will as Gods Will, and so you must come to Contentment: Here a Christian makes over his Will to God, and in making over his Will to God, he hath no other Will but only Gods: As suppose a man makes over his Debt to another man, if that man that I ow the Debt to, be satisfied and contented, I am satisfied, because I have made it over to him, and I need not be discontented and say, My Debt is not paid, and I am not satisfied; Yea, you are satisfied, for he that you made over your Debt to, he is satisfied. Just thus it is for all the world between God and a Christian, a Christian's heart makes over his will to God; now then, if Gods Will be satisfied, then I am satisfied, for I have then no will of mine own, it is melted into the Will of God; for that is the excellency of Grace, Grace doth not only subject the Will to God, but it doth melt the Will into Gods Will, so that they are now but one will; what a sweet satisfaction must the soul have then in this condition, when all is made over to God: You will say, This is hard. I will express it a little more: A gracious heart must needs have satisfaction this way, because godliness doth teach him this, To see that his good is more in God, than in himself; the good of my life, and comforts, and my happiness, and my glory, and my riches is more in God than it is in my self: (that perhaps we may speake to further, when we come to the Lessons that are to be learned.)

learned) But upon that it is, that a gracious heart hath Contentment, he doth melt his will into Gods, for saith he, if God have glory, I have glory, Gods glory is my glory, and therefore Gods will is mine, if God have riches, then I have riches, if God be magnified, then I am magnified, if God be satisfied, then I am satisfied, Gods wisdom and holiness is mine, and therefore his will must needs be mine, and my will must needs be his; here is the art of a Christians Contentment, he melts his will into the will of God, and makes over his will to God, *O Lord, thou shalt chuse our inheritance for us Psal.* 73.

The Seventh thing in the Art of Contentment is this, *The Mystery consists not so much by bringing any thing without, to make my condition more comfortable, as to purge out something that is within.* The men of the world now, when they would have Contentment, and want any thing, Oh they must have somewhat from without to content them; but saith a godly man, let me get something out that is in already, and then I shall come to Contentment; As suppose a man hath an aguish humor that makes his drink taste bitter, now saith he, You must put some Sugar into my drink, and his Wife puts in some, and yet the drink tasts bitter; Why? Because the bitterness comes from a bitter chollerick humor within; but let the Physician come and give him a bitter Potion to purge out the bitterness that is within, and then he can taste his drink well enough: Just thus it is with the men of the world, Oh such a condition is bitter, and if I could have such and such a mercy added to this mercy, then it would be sweet; now if God should put a spoonful or two of Sugar in, it would be bitter still. But the way to Contentment is to purge out thy lusts and bitter humors. *Jam.* 4. 1. *From hence are wars, and strifes, are they not from your lusts that are within you?* They are not so much from things without, but within; as sometimes I have said, It is not all the storms that are abroad that can make an earthquake, but the vapors that are got within: and so it is those lusts that are within in thy heart, if they were got out, thy condition would be a contented condition. These are the mysterious wayes of Godliness, that the men of the world never think of. When dideſt thou ever think of such a way as this is,

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for to go and purge out the distempers of thy heart that are within: Here are Seven particulars now named there were a great many more that I had thought of. And now without the understanding of these things, and the practice of them, you will never come to a true Contentation in your way, Oh you will be bunglers in this Trade of Christianity; but the right perceiving of these things, will help you to be instructed in it as in a Mysterie.

SERMON III.

PHIL. 4. 11.

For I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

HE Mysterie of Contentment will appear yet further. A gracious heart gets Contentment in a mysterious way, a way that the world is not acquainted with.

Eightly, *He lives upon the dew of Gods blessing* It's the similitude of one *Adrian Junius* setting out a contented man by a *Grashopper*, leaping and skipping up and down, that lives upon the dew, & he hath his motto, *I am content with what I have, and hope for better.* A Grashopper doth not live upon the grass as other things do, you cannot know what it feeds upon, other things though as little as Grashoppers, yet feed upon seeds or little flies, and such things, but the Grashopper, you know not what it feeds upon, So a Christian can get food that the world knows not of

of, in a secret way is a Christian fed by the dew of the blessing of God, a poor man or woman that hath but a little which hath grace, lives a more contented life than his rich neighbour that hath a great deal coming in, we find it so ordinarily, so that though they have but a little, yet they have a secret blessing of God going in it, that they are not able to express to any other man; if you would come to them and say, How comes it that you live so comfortable as you do? they are not able to tell you what they have, but they find there is a sweetnes in what they do enjoy, and they know this by experience that they never had such sweetnes in former times, that though they had more plenty in former times than now they have, yet they know they had not such sweetnes: but how this comes they cannot tell; and we may shew some particulars, even in that, Godly men do enjoy, that makes their condition to be sweet.

As now, Take these four or five particulars that a Godly man finds Contentment in what he hath, though it be never so little.

1. *Because in what he hath, he hath the love of God*, he hath Gods love to him in what he hath: If a King should send a piece of meat from his own table, it is a great deal more comfortable to a Courtier than if he had twenty dishes at ordinary allowance, if the King send but any little thing and say, Go and carry this to such a man as a token of my love, Oh how delightful is that unto him? Are your husbands at Sea, and send you a token of their love, it is more than fourty times so much that you have in your houses already: Every good thing the people of God do enjoy, they enjoy it in Gods love, as a token of Gods love, and coming from Gods eternal love unto them, this must needs be very sweet unto them.

2. *What they have is sanctified to them for good*: Other men have what they enjoy in a way of common providence, but the Saints in a special way; Others have what they have and there is all, they have meat, and drink, and houses, and cloaths, and money, and that's all: But a gracious heart finds contentment in this, I have it, and I have a sanctified use of it too; I find God going along with what I have to draw my heart neerer to him, and sanctifie my heart to him; If I find my heart drawn

neerer to God by what I enjoy; it's more a great deal than if I have it without any satisfying my heart by it; there's a secret dew that goes along with it, there's the dew of Gods love in it, and the dew of sanctification.

3. *A gracious heart what he hath he hath it upon free cost, he is not like to be called to pay for what he hath*: The difference between what a godly man hath, & a wicked man, is in this: A godly man is as a child in an Inne; an Inne-keeper hath his child in his house, and the Father provides his diet, and lodging, and what is fit for him; Now there comes a stranger, and the stranger hath dinner and supper provided, and lodging, but the stranger must pay for all; it may be the childs fare is meaner than the fare of the stranger, the stranger hath boyled, and rost, and bak'd, but he must pay for it, there must come a reckoning for it. Just thus it is, many of Gods people have but mean fare, but God as a Father provides it, and it is on free-cost, and they must not pay for what they have, it is paid for before; but the wicked in all their pomp, and pride, and bravery, they have what they can call for, but there must come a reckoning for all, they must pay for all in the conclusion. And is not better to have a little upon free cost, than to come to have all to pay for? Grace doth shew a man that what he hath, he hath it on free cost, from God as from a Father, and therefore must needs be very taken

4. *A godly man may easily still be content, though he hath but little, for what he hath he hath it by right of Jesus Christ, by the pure bloud of Jesus Christ*, he hath a right to it another manner of right cou'hac he hath, than any wicked man can have to what he hath; a wicked man hath these outward things; I do not say they are usurpers of what they have, but they have got them in, and that before God, but how? It is a right by meer donation, that is, God by his free bounty doth give it to them; but the right that the Saints have, it is a right of purchase, it is paid for, and it is their own, and they may in a holy manner, and holy way, challenge it whatever they have got. We cannot maintain the right of a holy man, the difference between his right, and the right of the wicked man is this, that by his sinful title, A Malefactor that is condemned to die,

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yet he hath by favor granted to him his ſupper provided over night, and you cannot ſay though the Malefactor hath forfeited all his right to all things, to every bit of bread, yet if he ſhall have a ſupper granted to him, he doth not ſteal it, though all his right is forfeited by his fault; after he is once condemned he hath no right to any thing. So it is with the wicked, they have forfeited all their right to all comforts in this world, they are condemned by God as Malefactors and are going to execution; but if God will in his bounty give them ſomething to preſerve them here in the world, they cannot be ſaid to be theeves or robbers: Now a man hath granted to him a ſupper over night before his execution, but is that like the ſupper that he was wont to have in his own houſe, when he eat his own bread, and had his wife and children about him? Oh! a diſh of green herbs at home would be a great deal better than any dainties in ſuch a ſupper as that is; but now a child of God hath not a right meerly by donation, but what he hath it is his own through the purchaſe of Chriſt; every bit of bread that thou eateſt, if thou beeſt a godly man or woman, Jeſus Chriſt hath bought it for thee, thou goeſt to market and buyeſt thy meat and drink with thy money, but know that before thou haſt bought it, or paid money, Chriſt hath bought it at the hand of God the Father with his blood; thou haſt it at the hands of men for money, but Chriſt hath bought it at the hand of his Father by blood: And certainly it is a great deal better and ſweeter now though it be but a little.

Fifthly, There's another thing that ſhews the ſweetneſs that there is in that little that the Saints have, by which they come to have Contentment, whereas others cannot: that is, *Every little that they have, it is but as an earneſt penny of all the glory that is reſerved for them, it is given them by God, but as the fore-runner of thoſe eternal mercies that the Lord intends for them.* Now if a man hath but twelve pence given to him as an earneſt penny for ſome great poſſeſſion that he muſt have, is not that better than if he had fourty pounds given unto him or her wife? So every comfort that the Saints have in this world, it is an earneſt penny to them of thoſe eternal mercies that the Lord hath provided for them; as every affliction that the wicked have here it is but the be-

ginning of sorrows, and fore-runner of those eternal sorrows that they are like to have hereafter in Hell; to every comfort thou hast, is a fore-runner of those eternall mercies thou shalt have with God in Heaven; not only the consolations of Gods Spirit as the fore-runners of those eternal comforts thou shalt have in Heaven; but when thou sittest at thy Table, and rejoycest with thy Wife and Children, and Friends, thou majest look upon every one of those but as a fore-runner, yea, the very earnest penny of Eternal life unto thee. Now then if this be so, no marvail though a Christian be contented; (this is a mystery to the wicked:) I have what I have out of the love of God, and I have it sanctified to me by God, and I have it of free-cost from God by the purchase of the blood of Jesus Christ, and I have it as a fore-runner of those eternal mercies that are reserved for me; and in this my soul rejoyces, Theres a secret dew of Gods goodness and Blessing upon him in his estate, that others have not: and by all this you may see the meaning of that Scripture, *Prov.* 16. 8. *Better is a little with righteousness, than great revenues without right.* A man that hath but a little, yet if he hath it with righteousness, it is better than a great deal without right; yea, better than the great revenues of the wicked: so you have it in another Scripture. That's the next Particular in *Christian Contentment*; the Mysterie is in this, That he lives upon the dew of Gods blessing in all the good things that he doth enjoy.

The Ninth thing where in the Mystery of *Christian Contentment* consists, is this: *Not only the good things that he hath, he hath the due of Gods blessing in them and they are very sweet to him; but all the afflictions, all the evils that do befall him, he can see love in them all, and can enjoy the sweetness of love in his afflictions, as well as in his mercies.* Yea, the truth is, The afflictions of Gods People come from the same Eternal Love that Jesus Christ did come from. And that speech of *Hierom*, *He is a happy man that is beaten, when the stroke is a stroke of love.* All Gods strokes are strokes of love & mercy, *All Gods wayes are mercy & truth to those that fear him & love him*, *Psalm.* 25. 10. The waies of God, the waies of affliction, as well as the waies of prosperity, are mercy and love to him. Grace gives a man an eye, a piercing

eye

eye to pierce into the Counsels of God, those Eternal Counsels of God for good unto him, even in his afflictions to see the love of God in every affliction as well as in prosperity. Now this is a mysterie to carnal hearts, they can see no such thing, perhaps they think God loves them when he prospers them, and makes them rich; but they think God loves them not when he doth afflict them, that's a Mysterie; but grace instructs men in that Mystery, grace enables men to see love in the very frowns of Gods face, and so comes to receive Contentment.

In the tenth place, A godly man hath Contentment in the way of a Mystery, *Because as he sees all his afflictions come from the same love that Jesus Christ did; so he sees them all sanctified in Jesus Christ, sanctified as a Mediator*, he sees (I say) all the sting and venom, and poyson of them all to be taken out by the vertue of Jesus Christ, the Mediator between God and Man: As now for instance, Thus, a Christian when he would have Contentment fals a working, What is my affliction? Is it poverty, that God strikes me withal? Jesus Christ had not a house to hide his head in, the Fowls of the air had nests, and the Foxes had holes, but the Son of Man not a hole to hide his head in: now my poverty is sanctified by Christs poverty, I can see by faith the curse and sting and venom of my poverty, taken out by the poverty of Jesus Christ, Christ Jesus he was poor in this world to deliver me from the curse of my poverty that it should not be cursed unto me, then my poverty is not afflictive, if I can be contented in such a condition. That is the way, not to stand and repine, because I have not what others have, no, but I am poor, and Christ was therefore poor that he might bless my poverty to me.

And so again, Am I discouraged, dishonored, is my good name taken away? why Jesus Christ he had dishonor put upon him, he was called *Beelzebub*, and a Samaritan, and they said he had a Devil in him, all the foul aspersions that could be were cast upon Jesus Christ, and this was for me, that I might have the disgrace that is cast upon me to be sanctified unto me, whereas another man his heart is overwhelmed with dishonor and disgrace, and he goes this way to work to get Contentment; perhaps if you be spoken ill of, you have no

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other way to ease and right your selves, but if they do rail upon you, you will rail upon them again; and thus you think to ease your selves: Oh! but a Christian hath another manner of way to ease himself; Others rail and speak ill of me, but did they not rail upon Jesus Christ, and speak evil of him? And what am I in comparison of Christ? And the subjection of Christ to such an evil, it was for me, that though such a thing should come upon me, I might know that the curse of it is taken from me through Christs subjection to that evil: thus a Christian can be contented when any body speaks ill of him: Now this is a Mysterie to you, to get Contentment after such a manner as this is. So, if men jeer and scoff at you, Did they not do so to Jesus Christ? they jeered and scoffed at him, and that when he was in his greatest extremitie upon the Cross, say they, Here's the King of the *Jews*, and they bowed the knee, and said, Hail King of the *Jews*, and put a reed into his hand and mocked him. Now I get Contentment in the midst of scorns and jeers, by considering that Christ was scorn'd and by acting Faith upon that which Christ did suffer for me. So, am I in great pain of my body? Jesus Christ had as great pain upon his body as I have; though its true, he had not such kind of sicknesses as we have, but yet he had as great pain and tortures in his body, and that that was deadly to him, as wel as any sickness is to us; The exercising of Faith upon what Christ did endure, that's the way to get Contentment in the midst of our pains: one lies vexing and fretting and cannot bear his pain; Art thou a Christian? hast thou ever tried this way of getting Contentment, To act thy faith upon all the pains and sufferings that Jesus Christ did suffer? this would be the way of Contentment; and a Christian gets Contentment under pains after this manner sometimes one that is very godly and gracious, you shall have them lie under grievous pains and extremities very cheerfully, and you wonder at it; this is the way that he gets it, he gets it by acting his faith upon what pains Jesus Christ did suffer. Thou art afraid of death; the way to get Contentment, it is, by exercising thy faith upon the death of Jesus Christ; yea, it may be thou hast inward troubles in thy soul, and God withdraws himself from thee, but still thy faith is to be exercised upon the suf-

sufferings that Jesus Christ endured in his Soul, he powred forth his Soul before God, then when he sweat drops of water and blood, he was in an Agonie in his very Spirit, and he found even God himself in a way to forsake him; now the acting thy faith upon Jesus Christ thus, brings Contentment; And is not this a mysterie to carnal hearts? A gracious heart finds Contentment in a way of a mysterie: *no man* (*vail*) though Saint *Paul* saith, *I am instructed in a Mystery, to be contented in whatsoever condition I am in.*

In the Eleventh place, There is yet a further mysterie (for this I hope you will find a verie useful point unto you) and you will see what a plain way there is, (before we have done) for one that is skill'd in Religion to get Contentment, though it's hard for one that is carnal. I say, the eleventh Mysterie in Contentment is this, *A gracious heart hath Contentment by fetching strength from Jesus Christ, be it able to bear his burden by fetching strength from another.* Now this is a riddle indeed, and it would be a ridiculous thing to be spoken of in the Schools of Philosophers, to say, If there be a burden upon you, you must fetch strength from another; indeed to have another to come and stand under the burden, that way they would know; but that you shall be strengthened by another's strength that is not neer you to your outward view, that they would think ridiculous: but now a Christian finds satisfaction in every condition by getting strength from another, by going out of it self to Jesus Christ, and by faith acting upon Christ, and bringing the strength of Jesus Christ into his own soul, and thereby is enabled to bear what soever God lays upon him, by the strength that he finds from Jesus Christ; *Of his fulness do we receive grace for grace*; there is strength in Jesus Christ not only to save us and love us, but strength to support us under all our burdens and afflictions, and Christ expects that when we are under any burden that we would but put our hand upon him to draw virtue & strength from him; the acting of Faith that's the great Grace that is to be alwaies acted under afflictions, it's true, other graces should be acted, but the grace of *Faith* it draws strength from Christ, in looking upon him that hath the fulness of all strength to be conveyed into the hearts of all Beleevers. Now

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if a man hath a burden upon him, yet he can have ſtrength added to him, if the burden be doubled, yet if he can have his ſtrength to be trebled, the burden will not be heavier but lighter than it was before to our natural ſtrength. Indeed our afflictions may be heavy, and we cry out, O we cannot bear them, we cannot bear ſuch an affliction; Though thou canſt not tell how to bear it with thine own ſtrength, yet what canſt thou tell what thou ſhalt do with the ſtrength of Jeſus Chriſt? Thou ſaieſt thou canſt not bear it, why doeſt thou think that Chriſt could not bear it? if Chriſt could bear it, why maieſt not thou come to bear it? You will ſay, can I have the ſtrength of Chriſt? Yea, that is made over to thee by faith, ſo the Scripture ſaith, *That the Lord is our ſtrength*. God himſelf is our ſtrength, and Chriſt is our ſtrength, divers Scriptures we have that way; that Chriſts ſtrength is thine, made over to thee, that ſo thou maieſt be able to bear whatſoever lies upon thee, and therefore we find ſuch a ſtrange kind of expreſſion in the Epiſtle of Saint *Paul* to the *Coloſſians*, praying for the Saints, *That they might be ſtrengthened with all might according unto his glorious power*, unto what? *Unto all patience and long ſuffering with joyfulneſs, Strengthned with al might, according to the Power of God, the glorious Power of God unto al patience & long ſuffering with joyfulneſs*: You may not therefore be content with a little ſtrength, ſo that you are able to bear what a man might bear by the ſtrength of reaſon & nature; But to be ſtrengthened with al might according to the glorious Power of God, unto all patience, & to al long-ſuffering; Oh you that are now under very heavy and ſad afflictions more than ordinary, look upon this Scripture, and conſider how this Scripture is made good in you, why may you not have this Scripture made good in you, if you be Godlie? You ſhould not be quiet in your own ſpirits, except that you in ſome meaſure do get this Scripture to be made good in you, ſo that you may with ſome comfort ſay, through Gods mercy I find that ſtrength coming into me that is here ſpoken of in this Scripture. You ſhall labour when you are under any great affliction (you that are Godly) to walk ſo, that others may ſee ſuch a Scripture made good in you; Here is the glorious Power of God that doth ſtrengthen his ſervants

vants to all long-ſuffering; and that with joyfulneſſe. Alas it may be you do not exerciſe ſo much patience, as a wiſe man or a wiſe woman that hath but naturall reaſon. But where is the power of God, the glorious power of God? where is the ſtrengthening with all might, unto all long-ſuffering and patience, and that with joyfulneſſe? It is true, the ſpirit of a man may be able to ſuſtain his infirmities, may be able to ſuſtain and keep up his ſpirits, the naturall ſpirit of a man, but much more then when this ſpirit is acted with grace and holineſſe, and when it is filled with the ſtrength of Jeſus Chriſt, this is the way of a godly mans getting contentment, the Myſterie of it, it is by fetching in ſtrength from Jeſus Chriſt.

Twelfthly, Another Myſterie that there is in it, it is, *That a godly heart, injoyes much of God in every thing it hath, and doth know how to make up all wants in God himſelf*: that is another Myſterie, he hath God in what he hath; that I ſpoke to ſomewhat before, in ſhewing the dew of Gods bleſſing in what he hath, for God is able to let out a great deal of his power in little things, and therefore the miracles that God hath wrought, have been as much in little things as in great; now as God lets out a great deal of his power in working miracles in ſmaller things, ſo he lets out a great deal of goodneſſe in mercy, in comforting and rejoicing the hearts of his people in little things as well as in great; there may be as much riches in a pearl as in a great deal of lumber; but now this is a diſtinct thing.

Further, a gracious heart as he lives upon Gods dew in a little that he hath, ſo when that little that he hath ſhall be taken from him, what ſhall he do then? Then you will ſay, if a man have nothing, there can be nothing fetcht out of nothing: But if the children of God have their little taken from them, they can make up all their wants in God himſelf: Such a man is a poor man, the plunderers came and took away all that he had, what ſhall he do then when all is gone? But when all is gone, there is an art and skill that godlineſſe teaches to make up all thoſe loſſes in God. Many men that have their houſes burnt, go about gathering, and ſo get up by many hands a little; but a godly man knows whither to goe to get up all, even in God himſelf

himself, so as he shall enjoy the quintessence of the same good and comfort as he had before, for a godly man doth not live so much in himself as he lives in God. This is now a mysterie to a carnal heart; I say, a gracious man doth not live so much in himself as he doth in God, he lives in God continually; if there be any thing cut off from the stream, he knows how to go to the Fountain and makes up all there; God is his All in All while he lives; I say, is in God that is his All in All. *Am not I to thee* (saith *Elkanah* to *Hannah*) *in stead of ten children?* So saith God to a gracious heart, Thou wantest this, thy Estate is plundered: Why, Am not I to thee in stead of ten Houses, & ten Shops? I am to thee in stead of *All*, yet not only *in stead* of All, but come to me and thou shalt *have All again in me.* This indeed is an excellent Art, to be able to draw from God what it had before in the creature: Christian, How didst thou enjoy comfort before? Was the creature any other to thee but a Conduit, a Pipe that did convey Gods goodnesse to thee? The Pipe is cut off saith God, Come to me the Fountain, and drinke immediately, though the Beams be taken away, yet the Sun remains the same in the firmament that ever it was: What is that that satisfies God himself, but because he doth enjoy all Fulnesse in himself? so he comes to have satisfaction in himself: Now if thou enjoyest God to be thy portion, if thy soul can say with the Church in *Lament.* 3.24. *The Lord is my portion, saith my soul.* Why shouldest thou not be satisfied and contented as God? God is contented, he is in eternal Contentment in himself; now if thou hadst that God to be thy portion, why shouldest not thou be contented with him alone? God is contented with himself alone; if thou hast him thou mayest be contented with him alone; and it may be, that is the reason that thy outward comforts are taken from thee, that God may be All in All to thee: It may be whilest thou hadst these things here, they did share with God in thy affection, a great part of the stream of thy affection ran that way; now God would have the full stream runne to him: As you know it is with a man that hath water comes to his house, and if there be severall Pipes upon which he finds the water comes but scantly into his Washhouse, he will rather stop the other Pipes, that he may have all

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the water come in where he would have it. So here it may be God had some stream of thy affection that ranne to him then when thou didst enjoy these things; yea, but a great deale was let out to the Creature, a great deale of thy affections did run waste; Now the Lord would not have the affections of his Children to run waste; he doth not care for other mens affections, but for thine they are precious, and God would not have them to run waste, therefore doth he cut off thy other Pipes, that thy heart might run wholly upon him: As if you have children, because you have servants perhaps do feed them, and give them things, you perceive that your servants do steal away the hearts of your children, you would hardly be able to bear it, you would be ready to turn away such a servant, and when the servant is gone, the child is at a great losse, it hath not the Nurse, but the Father or Mother intends by her putting away, that the affections of the child might run the more strongly towards himself, or herself; and what losse hath the child that the affections that ran in a rough channel before towards the servant, it runs now towards the Mother? So, those affections that ran towards the Creature, God would have them run towards himself, that so he may be All in All to thee here in this world. And a gracious heart can indeed tell how to enjoy God to be all in all to him: that is the happinesse of heaven, to have God to be all in all. The Saints in heaven have not houses and lands, and money, and meat, and drink and cloaths. You will say they do not need them: Why do they not? It is because God is all in all to them immediately. Now while thou livest in this world, thou mayest come to enjoy much of God, you may have much of heaven, while we live here in this life we may come to enjoy much of the very life that there is in heaven, and what is that but the enjoyment of God to be all in all to us? There is one text in the *Revelations* that speaks of the glorious condition of the Church that is like to be even here in this world, *Rev.* 21. 22. *And I saw no Temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb are the Temple of it; and the City had no need of the Sun, neither of the Moon to shine in it, for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.* They had no need of the Sun or Moon. It speaks of such a glorious condition that

the Church is like to be in here in this world; this doth not speak of heaven: and that appears plainly that this is not spoken of heaven, but of a glorious estate that the Church shall be in here, in this world, for it follows pretently in the 24. and 26. verses, *And they* (speaking of the Kings of the earth:) *And the Kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor unto it*: Why, the Kings of the Earth shall not bring their glory and honour into Heaven; but this is such a time when the Kings of the Earth shall bring their glory and honor to the Church. And in the 26. verse, *And they shall bring the glory and honor of the Nation into it*; therefore it must needs be meant here in this world and not in heaven. Now if there be such a time here in this world, that God shall be All in All, that in comparison there shall be no such need of Creatures as now there is, then the Saints should labour to live as near that life as possibly they can, that is, to make up all in God: Oh that you would but minde this mysterie, that it may be a reality to the hearts of the Saints in such times as these are, they would finde this privilidge, that they get by Grace, to be worth thousands of worlds: Heave is that of *Jacob* that I mentioned in another case, it is remarkable, and comes in fully here, in *Gen.* 33. that notable speech of *Jacob* when his brother *Esau* did meet him, ye finde in one place that *Esau* he refused *Jacobs* present, in the 8. verse, when *Jacob* gave his present to him, he refused it, and told *Jacob* that he had enough; *What meanest thou by all this drove which I met?* *And he said, These are to finde grace in thy sight*: *And Esau said, I have enough*. Now in the 11. verse there *Jacob* urges it still, (and saith *Jacob*) *I beseech thee take it, for I have enough*; now in your tongue it is the same in English, *I have enough* (saith *Esau*) and *I have enough* (saith *Jacob*) but in the Hebrew *Jacobs* word is different from *Esaus*, *Jacobs* word signifies, *I have all things*, and yet *Jacob* was poorer then *Esau*. Oh this should be a shame to us, that an *Esau* should say, I have enough; but now a Christian should say, I have not only enough; but I have all: how hath he all? Because he hath God that is All. And it was a notable speech of one, *He hath all things, that hath him that hath all things*. Surely thou hast all things because thou hast him *for thy Portion*, who hath all things: God hath

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all things in himself, and thou hast God to be thine for thy portion, and in that thou hast all, and this is the mysterie of Contentment; It makes up all wants in God, this is that that the men of the world have little skill in.

Now I have divers other things to open in the Mysterie of Contentment. I should shew likewise that a godly man not only makes up all in God, but finds enough in himself to make up all, to make up all in himself, not from himself, but in himself, and that may seem to be stranger than the other: to make up all in God is somewhat, nay to make up all in himself, not from himself, but in himself, that is, a gracious heart hath so much of God within himself, that he hath enough there to make up all his wants that are without. In *Prov.* 14.14. *A good man shal be satisfied from himself*, from that that is within himself, that is the meaning, a gracious man he hath a bird within his own bosome that makes him melodie enough, though he wants musick, *The Kingdom of heaven is within you*: In *Luk* 17. 21. *He hath a Kingdome within him, and a Kingdome of God*: you see him spoken ill of abroad, he hath a conscience within him that makes up the want of a name and credit, that is instead of a thousand witnesses.

Thirteenth, *A gracious heart fetches Contentment from the Covenant that God hath made with him.* Now this is a way of fetching Contentment that the men of the world know not of: they can fetch Contentment, if they have the creature to satisfie them: But to fetch Contentment from the covenant of grace that they have little skill in. I should here have opened two things; First, how to fetch Contentment from the covenant of grace in generall. (But I shall speak to that in the next Sermon and now only a word to the second:) Secondly, how he fetches Contentment from the particular branches of the covenant, that is, from the particular promises that he hath for the supplying of every particular want: there is no condition that a godly man or woman can be in, but there is some promise or other in the Scripture to help him in that condition. And that is the way of his Contentment, to go out to the promises, and fetch from the promise, that which may supply. But this is but a dry business to a carnall heart; but it is the

most

most reall thing in the world to a gracious heart; when he finds want of Contentment he repairs to the Promise, and the Covenant; and falls to pleading the Promises that God hath made. As I should have shewed severall promises that God hath made, let the affliction be what it will, I will but only mention one that is the saddest affliction of all; in case of the Visitation and the Plague. In *Psal.* 91. now those that cannot have their friends come to them by reason of the plague, and that cannot have other comfort; in other afflictions they might have their friends and other things to comfort them, but in that they cannot, *Psal.* 21. 10. *There shal no evil befall thee, neither shal any plague come nigh thy dwelling*; then here is a promise for the pestilence in the 5. and 6. verses, this is a Scripture to those that are in danger of it. You will say, this is a promise, that the plague shall not come nigh them, but mark these two are joined, *there shall no evil befall thee; neither shal the plague come nigh thee*; the *evil of it* shall not come nigh thee.

Object. You will say, *It doth come to many godly men, and how can they make use of this Scripture? it is rather a Scripture that may trouble them, because here is a promise that it shall not come nigh them, and yet it doth come nigh them as well as others.*

Answ. First, this is the answer I would give, The promises of outward deliverances that were made to the people of God in the time of the Law were to be understood then a great deale more literally, and fulfilled more literally than in the times of the Gospel, God makes it up otherwise with as much mercy, though God made a covenant of grace and eternall life in Christ with them, yet I think there was another covenant too, that God speaks of as a distinct covenant for outward things to deal with his people by, according to their wayes either in outward prosperity, or in outward afflictions, more than now, in a more punctuall set way, then in the times of the Gospell; and therefore when the *Children of Israel* did but sin against God, they were sure to have publick judgements to come upon them, and if they did well, alwayes publick mercies; the generall constant way of God was to deal with the people of the Jews according as they did well or ill, (in an ordinary way) with outward judgments and outward mercies: but it's not so now in these

times

times of the Gospell; we cannot bring such a certain conclusion, that God did deal so severely with men by such and such afflictions, that he will deal so with them now: and so, that they shall have outward prosperity as they had then: therefore that is the first thing for the understanding of this and all other texts of that kind.

The second answer I would give, is this; It may be their faith doth not reach to this promise; and God brings many times many outward afflictions, because the faith of his people doth not reach the promise, and that not only in the old Testament, but in the time of the new Testament; *Zechariah* his time may be said to be in the time of the new Testaments, when he was struck with dumbnesse because he did not beleeve, and that is given to be the cause why he was struck with dumbnesse. But you will say now, Hath faith warrant to beleeve deliverance, that it shall be fully delivered? I dare not say so, but it may act upon it, to beleeve that God will make it good his own way; perhaps you have not done so much, and so upon that, this promise is not fulfilled to you.

Thirdly, When God doth make such promises to his people, yet still it must be with this reservation, that God must have liberty to these three things.

1 That notwithstanding his promise, he will have liberty to make use of any thing for your chastisement.

2 That he must have liberty to make use of your estates, or liberties, or lives, for the furtherance of his own ends: If it be to be a stumbling block to wicked and ungodly men, God must have liberty; though he hath made a promise to you, he will not lose the propriety that he hath in your estates and lives.

3 God must have so much liberty to make use of what you have, for to shew that his wayes are unsearchable, and his judgments past finding out, God reserves these three things in his hand still.

Object. But you will say, *What good then is there in such a promise that God makes to his people?*

Answ. 1. That thou art under the protection of God more than others. *Object.* But what comfort is this if it doth befall me?

Ans.

Answ. Thou hast this comfort, that the evil of it shall be taken from thee, that if God will make use of this affliction for other ends, yet he will do it so as he will make it up to thee some other way. Perhaps you have given your children such a thing, but yet afterwards if you have use of that thing, you will come and say, I must have it, Why father may the child say, you gave it me? But saith the father I must have it, and I will make it up to you some other way: Now the child doth not think that the fathers love is ever a whit the less to him. So when there is any such promise as this is, that God by his promise gives thee his protection, and yet for all that such a thing befals thee, it is but as if the father should say, I gave you that indeed but let me have it and I wil make it up to you some other way that shall be as good; saith God, let me have your health and liberty, and life, and it shall be made up to you some other way.

Secondly, When ever the plague or pestilence comes to those that are under such a promise, it is for some speciall and notable work, and God requires of them to search and examine in a speciall manner to find out his meaning; there is so much to be learned in the promise that God hath made concerning this particular evil, that the people of God they may come to quiet and content their hearts in this affliction. I read in this *Psalme* that God hath made a promise to his people, to deliver them from the plague and pestilence, and yet I doe find it to come: It may be I have not made use of my faith in this promise heretofore; and if God do bring afflictions upon me, yet God will make it up some other way, God made a promise to deliver me, or at least to deliver me from all the evil of it, now if this thing doth befall me and yet I have a promise of God, certainly the evil of it is taken away, this promise tells me that if it doth befall me, yet it is for some notable end, and because God hath use of my life, and intends to fetch about his glory some way that I know not of: And if he will come in a fatherly way of chastisement, yet I will be satisfied in the thing: So a Christian heart by reasoning out of the Word, comes to satisfie his soul in the middest of such a heavie hand of God and in such a distressed condition as that is. Now carnall hearts they finde

find not that power in the Word, that healing vertue that there is in the Word, to heal their distracted cares, and the troubles of their spirits; but now, those that are godly when they come to hear the Word, they find out, that in the Word there is as a plaister to al their wounds, and so they come to have ease and contentment, in such conditions as are very grievous and miserable unto others. But now, for other particular promises, and more generally for the Covenant of grace, how, and in what mysterious way the Saints do work to fetch out Contentment and satisfaction to their souls, we shall refer to the next time.

SERMON IV.

PHIL. 4. 11.

For I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

IN the last exercise we spoke of divers things in the mysterie of Contentment, and in the close we spoke of two more, but we could not have time to open either of them, I shall open them a little more largely, and then proceed to some few more, and so to other things in the point.

That is the next then, A Christian heart hath not only contentment in *God*, (and certainly, he that hath God, must have all, he that hath him that hath all, he hath all) *But he is able to make up all his outward wants of creature-comforts from what he finds in himself*: That may seem to be more strange; It is true, perhaps we may convince men though they do not feel by experience what it is to make up all in God, yet we may convince them that if they have him that hath all things, then they have all; for there is such a fulness in God, he being the infinite first Being of all things that may make up all their wants.

But here is another thing, that is further: I say, A godly man can make up whatsoever he wants without the creature, he can make it up in himself, in *Proverbs* 14. verse 14. *A good man is satisfied in himself*: as now, If he wants outward comforts, good chear, feasting; a good Conscience is a continuall feast, he can make up the want of a feast by that peace he hath in his own Conscience: if he wants melody abroad, he hath a bird within him that sings the most melodious songs than are in the world and the most delightfull. And then, Doth he want honour? he hath his own conscience witnessing for him, that is as a thousand witnesses; the Scripture saith in *Luke* 7. verse 21. *Neither shal they say, Lo, here; or Lo, there: for the Kingdom of God is within you*; A Christian then whatsoever he wants he can make it up, for he hath a Kingdome in himselfe, the Kingdom of God is within him. If one that is a King should meet with a great deal of trouble when he is abroad; yet hee contents himselfe with this, I have a Kingdome of mine owne: now here it is said, the Kingdom of God is within a man; truly, upon this Scripture of the Kingdom of God being within, those that are learned, if they would but look into that Comment upon the Gospel that we have of a learned man, they shal find a very strange conceit that he hath about this very text, he confesses indeed it is unutterable, and so indeed it is: *The Kingdom of God is within you*: he makes it that there is such a presence of God and Christ within the soul of a man, that when the body dyes (he saith) that the soul goes into God and Christ that is within him; the souls going into God and Christ, and enjoying of that communion with God and Christ that is within its self, that is heaven to it (saith he.) He confesses he is not able to expresse himself, nor others are not able to understand fully what he intends; but certainly for the present before death, there is a Kingdom of God within the soul, such a manifestation of God in the soul that is enough to content the heart of any godly man in the world, the Kingdome that he hath now within him, he shall not stay till afterwards, till he goes to heaven; but certainly there is a Heaven in the soul of a godly man, he hath Heaven already: Many times when you go to comfort your friends in their afflictions, you will say,

Heaven.

Heaven will pay for al, nay, you may certainly find Heaven payes for al already; there is Heaven within the souls of the Saints, that is a certain truth, no soul shall ever come to Heaven, but that soul that hath Heaven come to it first. When you die you hope you shal go to Heaven: But if you shal go to Heaven when you die, Heaven wil come to you before you die. Now this is a great Mysterie to have the Kingdome of heaven in the soul, no man can know this but that soul that hath it; that Heaven which is within the soul for the present (I say) it is like the white Stone and the new name, that none but those that have it can understand it: It is a miserable condition, my Brethren, to depend upon creatures altogether for our Contentment; you know rich men account it a great happiness, if they need not go to buy things by the penny as others do, they have al things for pleasure or profit upon their own ground, and al their inheritance lyes entire together, they have no body comes within them, but they have al within themselves, there lyes their happiness: whereas other poorer people are fain to go from one market to another to provide them necessaries; but yet great rich men they have Sheep and Beeves, Corn, and Cloathing, and al things else of their own within themselves, and herein they place their happiness: But this is the happiness of a Christian, that he hath that within himself that may satisfie him more then al these; That place which we have in the first of *James*, seems to allude to that condition of men which have al their estates within themselves; *James* 1. 4. *But let patience have her perfect work, that we may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing*: the word there used signifies to have the whole inheritance to our selves, not a broken inheritance, but that where al lies within themselves; as a man that hath not a piece of his estate here, and a piece there, but he hath it al lies together; and the heart being patient under afflictions, finds it self to be in such an estate as this is, finds his whole inheritance to be together, and al intire within its self. And now that to shew this by further similitudes; it is with him being filled with good things, just like as it is with many a man that enjoyes abundance of comforts at home at his own house, God grants to him a conveniene ha-

bitation, a comfortable Yoke-fellow, and fine Walks and Gardens, and hath all things at home that he could desire; now this man cares not much for going abroad: other men are fain to go abroad to take the air, but he hath a sweet air at home; and they are fain to go abroad to see friends, because they have railings and contendings at home; many ill husbands will give this reason (if his wife make any moane and complaint of his ill husbandry) of their bad husbandry, and will make that their excuse to go abroad, because they can never be quiet at home. Now we account those men most happy that have all at home; those that have close houses that are unsavoury, and smels ill, they delight to go into the fresh air; but it is not so with many others, that have those at home; those that have no good cheer at home, they are fain to go abroad to friends, but those that have their tables furnished, they had as lieve stay at home: So a carnall man, he hath but little Contentment in his own spirit; it is *Austines* similitude, saith he, An ill conscience is like a scolding wife; a man (saith he) that hath an ill conscience he cares not to look into his own soul, but lowes to be abroad, and looks into other things, but never looks to himself; but one that hath a good conscience he delights in looking into his own heart, he hath a good conscience within him: And so a carnall heart, because there is nothing but filthiness, a filthy stinke in himself, nothing but vilenes and baseness with in him, upon this it is that he seeks his Contentment elsewhere: and as it is with a vessel that is ful of Liquor, if you strike upon it, it wil make no great noise; but if it be empty, then it makes a great noise: So it is with the heart, An heart that is ful of grace and goodness within, such a one wil bear a great many strokes and never make any noise; but an empty heart, if that be struck, that will make a noise; those men and women that are so much complaining, and alwayes whining, it is a sign that there is an emptines in their hearts; but if their hearts were filled with grace they would not make such a noise as now they doe. As a man that hath his bones filled with Marrow, and veins filled with good blood, he complains not of cold as others do: so a gracious heart having the Spirit of God within him, and his heart filled with grace, he hath that within

within him that makes him finde Contentment. It is a speech of *Seneca*, Indeed those things that I suffer wil be incredible heavy when I cannot bear my self: but now if I be no burden to my self, if I have al quiet within mine own heart, then I can bear any thing: many men through their wickednes they have burdens without, but the greatest burden is the wickednes of their own hearts, they are not burdened with their sins in a godly way, that would ease their burden, but they have stil their wickednes in the power of it, and so they are burdens to themselves. The distempers of mens hearts are mighty burdens to them; many times a godly man hath enough within to content him; Vertue it is content with its selfe for to live wel; (It is a speech of *Cicero*, and it is in one of his Paradoxes) It finds enough within its own sphære for the living happily: but how few are acquainted with this Mysterie? Many think, Oh if I had that that another man hath, how happily and comfortably should I live: Oh but if thou beest a Christian, whatsoever thy condition be, yet thou hast enough within thy self. You wil say, such and such men that have al things, they need not be beholding to any body, you shal have many that wil labour and take pains when they are young, that they might not be beholding to others, I love to live of my self; now a Christian may do so; not that he doth not live upon God (I mean not so) but upon that which he hath of God within himself, that he can live upon, although he doth not enjoy the comforts that are without himself, that is it which I mean, and those that are godly and keep close to God in their communion with him, they understand what I mean by this, that a Christian hath supply of al his wants within himself; and here you may see that the spirit of a Christian is a precious spirit, a godly spirit is precious, why? because it hath enough to make him happy within himself.

The next thing that the Mystery of Contentment consists in, is this, *That a gracious heart fetches supply of al from the Covenant and so comes to Contentment*: which is a dry thing to a carnal spirit. Now there are two things here.

First, he fetches Contentment from the covenant in general, that is, from the great covenant that God hath made with him in Christ.

Secondly,

Secondly, From the particular promises that God hath made with him in the Covenant.

First, From the Covenant in generall. I'le give you one Scripture for that, it is very remarkeable, in the 2 of *Sam.* 23. vers. 5. *Although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things, & sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not grow.* It is a most admirable Scripture of *David*, that yet had not the Covenant of Grace opened so fully as we have. But yet mark what *David* saith, Although I find not my house so, that is, so comfortably every way as I would, although it be not so, what hath he to content his spirit? saith he, He hath made with me an everlasting Covenant; this is that that helps all. I am not (may some one say) thus and thus with God, I do not find God come in so fully, or it is not with my house and family as I hoped it might be, perhaps there is this or that affliction upon my house; suppose you should have the Plague come into your house, and your house is not safe, and you have not that outward comfort in your house as formerly you had, but can you read this Scripture, and say, Although my house be not so blest with health as others mens houses are; although my house be not so, yet he hath made with me an everlasting Covenant, I am one yet in Covenant with God, the Lord hath made with me an everlasting Covenant: as for those things in this world, I see they are but momentany, they are not everlasting, I see in a family when all was well but a weeke ago, now all is down, and the Plague hath swept away a great many of them, and the rest are left in sadnes and mourning: we see there is no trusting in the things of this world, yet the Lord hath made with me an everlasting Covenant ordered in all things: I find disorder in my heart, in my family; but the everlasting Covenant, that is ordered in all things; yea, and that is sure; Alack, there is no sureness here in these things, I can be sure of nothing here, especially in these times, we know that a man can be sure of nothing he hath, who can be sure of his estate? perhaps some of you here that have lived well and comfortably before, and all was well about you, and you thought your mountaine was strong, but you see within a day or two all is

flown

ken away from you, so that there is no sureness in the things of this world: But saith he, the Covenant is sure: what I venture to the Sea that is not sure, but here is an Assurance Office indeed, here is a great Assurance Office for the Saints, and they not at charge, but only the exercising of Grace, for they may go to this Assurance Office to assure every thing that they venture, either to have the thing it self, or be paid for it: In an Assurance Office you cannot be assured to have the very goods come in that you insured, but if they be lost the Insurers do engage themselves to make it good to you. And this Covenant of grace that God hath made with his people, it is Gods Assurance Office, and the Saints in al their fears may, and ought to go to the Covenant to assure al things to them, to assure their estates, and assure their lives. You wil say, How are they sure, their lives and estates go as wel as others? But God engages himself to make up all: And then marke what follows, *This is all my salvation*; Why *David*, wilt thou not have salvation from thine Enemies and outward dangers, from pestilence and plague? The frame of his spirit is quieted, as if he should say, If that salvation comes, wel and good, I shal praise God for it, but that that I have in the Covenant that is my salvation, I look upon that as enough: Yea and then further, *This is al my salvation, and al my desire*, Why *David*, is there not something else that thou wouldst have besides this Covenant? No saith he, It is al involved in this. Now surely those men or women must needs live contented lives that have al their desires; now saith the holy man here, this is al my desire, *And though he make it not to grow*. But for al this Covenant perhaps you will not prosper in the world as other men do: True, but I am at a point for that: Though God doth not make my house to grow, I have al my desires.

Thus you see how a godly heart finds Contentment in the covenant. Many of you speak of the Covenant of God, and of the Covenant of Grace, but have you found it so effectual to your soules? have you tasted this sweetnesse from the Covenant and Contentednesse to your hearts in your sad conditions? It is a speciall sign of the truth of Grace in any soul, that when any affliction doth befall him, in a kind of natural way he doth presently

repair

repair to the covenant; just as a child as soon as ever it is in danger, you shal not need to tel him and say, when you are in danger you must go to your father or mother, nature tels him so: so it is with a gracious heart, as soon as it is in any trouble or affliction there is a new nature that doth carry him to the covenant presently, and there it finds ease and rest: and if you find that your hearts do thus work, presently to be running to the covenant, it is an excellent sign of the truth of grace; that is for the general.

But now for particular promises in the covenant of grace. A gracious heart looks upon every promise as coming from the root of the great covenant of grace in Christ. Other men look upon some particular promises, that God wil help them in straights and keep them and the like; but they look not upon the connexion of such particular promises, to the root, the covenant of grace; Now Christians do misse of a great deal of comfort they might have from the particular promises in the Gospel, if they would look upon their connexion to the root, the great covenant that God hath made with them in Christ. Now I remember I spoke a little about that, that in outward promises in the time of the Law, they might rest more upon them than we can in the time of the Gospel. I gave you the reason why we that live in the time of the Gospel cannot rest so fully, for a literal performance of outward promises that we meet withal in the old Testament, as they might in the time of the Law; for there was a special covenant that God pleased to cal a new covenant by way of distinction from the other covenant that is made with us in Christ for eternal life: And so even the Law was given to them in a more peculiar way, for an external covenant of outward blessings in the Land of *Canaan*, and so God did deal with them in a more external covenant than he doth now with his people. Yet godliness hath the promise of this life, and that which is to come. We may make use of the promises for this life, but yet not so much to rest upon the literal performance of them as they might; but that God wil make them good some way or other, in a spiritual way, if not in an outward way. We must lay no more upon outward promises then this, and therefore if we wil lay

more

more, we make the Promise to bear more than it wil bear out. For to give som instance; To beleeve fullie and confidently, that the Plague shall not come nigh such a house, (I say) it is to lay more upon such a promise than it will bear. I opened that promise in *Psal.* 91. Now if I had lived in the time of the Law, perhaps I might have been somwhat more confident of the literal performance of the promise than I can now in the time of the Gospel, the Promise now bears no more than this, That God hath a special protection over his People, and that he will diliver them from the evil of such an affliction; and if he doth bring such an affliction, it is more than an ordinary providence. tis some speciall providence that God hath in it. I had thought to have given you divers promises for the Contentment of the heart in the time of affliction: *Isa.* 43. 2. *when thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.* Certainly though this promise was made in the time of the Law yet it will be made good to all the Saints now, one way or other either in the Letter, or some other way. For so we find it plainlie, that promise that was made to *Joshua, I will not fail thee nor forsake thee, Josh.* 1. 5. It's applied to the Christians in the time of the Gospell. So that here is the way of faith in bringing Contentment by the Promises, that all the Promises that ever were made to our forefathers, from the beginning of the world the Saints of God have an interest in them, they are their inheritances, and so goes on from one generation to another and by that they come to have Contentment, because they do inherit all the promises made in all the Book of God; So *Heb.* 13. 5. shews plainly, that it is our inheritance, and we do not inherit less now than they did in *Joshua's* time, but we inherit more, for you shall find in the place of the *Hebrews*, there is more said than unto *Joshua*; to *Joshua* God saith, He will not leave him, nor forsake him; now in that place of the *Hebrews* in the Greek there is five negatives, *I will not, not, not, not not* againe there is the elegancie of it very much, in the Greek I say there is five negatives in that little sentence; as if God should say, I will not leave you, no, I will not, I will not

with such earnestness five times together: So that we have not only the same promises that they had, but we have them more enlarged and more full, though still not so much in the litteral sence, for that indeed is the last part of the promise, In *Esa.* 54. 17. there God made a Promise, *that no weapon formed against his people should prosper, and every toung that shall rise against them in judgment thou shalt condemn,* (mark what follows.) *This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me saith the Lord*: This is a good promise for a Soldier, though still not to lay too much upon the litteral sence: True, it holds forth thus much, that Gods protection is in a speciall manner over Soldiers that are godly, *And every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment, thou shalt condemn*: and this is against false witnesses too. Oh you, that your friends never left you any thing, you will say, my friends died and left me not a groat but I thank God, God hath provided for me; but though thy father or mother died and left thee no heritage, yet thou hast a heritage in the promise, *This is their heritage*. So that there's no godly man or woman, but is a great Heir. Therefore when thou lookest into the Book of God and findest any Promise there, thou maiest make that thine own. Just as an Heir that rides over divers fields and meadows, saith he, This meadow is my heritage, and this Corn-field is my heritage; and then he sees a fair house, and saith he, this fair house is my heritage; and he looks upon them with another manner of eye than a stranger that shall ride over those fields. So a carnall heart reads the Promises, and reads them but meerly as stories, not that they have any great interest in them: But a godly man every time he reads the Scriptures (remember this Note when you are reading the Scripture) and there meeteth with a Promise, he ought to lay his hand upon it and say, this is a part of my heritage, it's mine, and I am to live upon it, and this will make you to be contented. Here's a Mysterious way of Contentment. So in *Psal.* 34. 10. and 37. 6. there's divers other Promises that brings Contentment. In *Isa.* 58. 10. And thus much for the Mysterie of Contentment by way of the Covenant.

There is two or three things more that shew how a Godly

man, hath Contentment after another kind of way than any Carnall heart in the world hath, it's a Mysterious way, as thus.

He hath Contentment by realizing the glorious things of Heaven to him, he hath the Kingdom of Heaven as present, and the glory that is to come, by faith he makes it as present. So the Martyrs they had Contentment in their sufferings. for said some of them, Though we have but a hard breakfast, yet we shall have a good dinner, we shall presently be in Heaven, do but shut your eyes (saith one) and you shall be in Heaven presently. 2. *Cor.* 4. 16. *We faint not* (saith the Apostle) Why? *Because these light afflictions that are but of a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* They see Heaven before them and that content them. You Marriners when you can see the Haven before you, though you were mightily troubled before you could see any Land, yet when you come nigh the shore and can see such a land-mark, that contents you exceedingly; a godly man in the midst of the waves and storms that he meets withal, he can see the Glory of Heaven before him and so contents himself; one drop of the sweetness of Heaven is enough to take away all the sowr and bitter of all the afflictions in the world: Indeed here we know that one drop of sowr, or one drop of gall will make bitter a great deal of honey, put a spoonfull of sugar into a cup of gall or wormwood, that will not sweeten it, but if you put a spoonful of gall into a cup of sugar it will imbitter that; now it's otherwise in Heaven, one drop of sweet will sweeten a great deal of sowr affliction, but a great deal of sowr and gall will not imbitter a soul that sees the glory of Heaven that is to come; now a carnal heart hath no Contentment but from what he sees before him in this world, but a godly heart hath Contentment from that that he sees laid up for him in the highest Heavens.

The last thing that I would name is this, *A godly man hath Contentment by opening and letting out his heart to God*: other men or women they are discontented, but how doe they help themselves? by railing, by ill language, such an one crosses them, and they have no way to help themselves but by railing, and by bitter words, and so they ease themselves that way when they

are angry, but a godly man when he is croſt, how doth he eaſe himſelf? he is ſenſible of his croſs as well as you, and he goes to God in prayer, and there opens his heart to God, and lets out his ſorrows and fears, and then can come away with a joyfull countenance; now doe you find that you can come away from prayer and not look ſad? As it's ſaid (in 1 *Sam.* 1. 18.) of *Hannah*, that when ſhe had been at prayer her countenance was no more ſad, there ſhe was comforted; and this is the right way of Contentment. Thus we have don with the Myſteries of Contentment. Now if you can put theſe things together that we have ſpoken of, you may ſee fully what an Art Chriſtian Contentment is; *Paul* had need learn it; you ſee Contentment is not ſuch a poore buſineſs as many make it, to ſay you muſt be content &c. But it is a great Art and Myſterie of Godlineſs to be contented in the way of a Chriſtian, and it will appear yet further to be a Myſterie, when we come to the Third Head; and that's to ſhew what thoſe leſſons are that a gracious heart doth learn when it learns to be contented, I have learn'd to be contented; *Learn'd*, what Leſſons have you learn'd? As now A Scholer that hath great learning and underſtanding in Arts and Sciences, how did he begin it? he began (as we uſe to ſay) his A B C. and then afterwards he came to his Teſtament, and Bible, and Accidence, and ſo to his Grammer, and afterwards to his other Books; ſo he learn'd one thing after another; So a Chriſtian coming to Contentment is as a Scholer in Chriſts School, and there are divers Leſſons to teach the ſoul to bring it to this learning; every godly man or woman is a Scholer, it cannot be ſaid of any Chriſtian that he is illiterate, but he is literate; a learned man, a learned woman: now the leſſons that Chriſt teaches, to bring us to Contentment, are theſe:

The firſt great Leſſon is, The Leſſon of *Self-denial*: and though it be a great and hard leſſon, as you know a child at his A B C. is hard: ſo it was that that Martyr ſpoken of *Broadford*, the Martyr ſaid, *Who ſo ever learns not this firſt Leſſon of the Croſs, he can never learn his A B C. in Chriſtianity*. Here Chriſt begins with his Scholers, yea though in the loweſt form muſt begin with this; if you mean to be Chriſtians at all, you muſt buckle to this or you can never

be

be Christians: There is none can be a Scholer except he doth learn his *A B C*: so thou must learn the lesson of self-deniall or thou canst never come to be a Scholer in Christs School, to be learned in this Mystery of contentment: That is the first Lesson that Christ teaches any soul: Oh self-deniall, that brings contentment that brings down and softens a mans heart: a thing (you know) that is soft, if you strike upon it, it makes no noise, but if you strike upon a hard thing it makes a noise; so the hearts of men that are full of themselves, and hardened with self-love, if they have any stroke they make a noise; but a self denying christian yeilds to Gods hand, and makes no noise; as when you strike upon a Wool-sack it makes no noise because it yeilds to the stroke; so a self-denying heart yeilds to the stroke, and thereby comes to this contentment. Now in this lesson of self-denial there are divers things: I will not enter into the doctrine of self-denial, but only shew you how Christ teaches self-denial, and how that brings Contentment.

First, *Such as are learns to know that he is nothing*; he comes to this, to be able to say, Well, I see I am nothing in my self, now that man or woman which indeed knows that he or she is nothing, and hath learned it throughly, will be able to bear any thing: The way to be able to bear any thing, it is to know our selves to be nothing in our selves. Saith God to us, *Wilt thou set thine heart upon that which is nothing?* Prov. 23. 5. Speaking of riches, why blessed God, dost not thou do so? thou hast set thy heart upon us, and yet we are nothing. God would not have us set our hearts upon riches because they are nothing, and yet God is pleased to set his heart upon us, and yet we are nothing, that is Gods Grace, free grace, and therefore it is no great matter what I suffer, for I am as nothing.

Secondly, *I deserve nothing*: I am nothing, and I deserve nothing; suppose I have not this and that that others have, I am sure I deserve nothing except it be Hell; you will answer a wife of your servants fault that is not content with what you deserve? or your Children, Do you deserve it that you are so eager upon it? you think to stop their mouths thus; so we may easily stop your own mouths, we deserve nothing, and therefore why should we be impatient if we have not what we desire

if

if we had deſerved any thing, we might have ſome trouble of ſpirit, as a man that hath deſerved wel of the State, or of his friends, and he finds not an anſwerable encouragement, it troubles him mightly, but if he be conſcious to himſelf that he hath deſerved nothing, he is content with a repulſe.

Thirdly *I can do nothing. Without me you can do nothing*, ſaith Chriſt *Joh.* 15. 6. Why ſhould I ſtand much upon it to be troubled and be diſcontented if I have not this or that, when the truth is, I can do nothing? If you ſhould com to one that is angrie becauſe he hath not ſuch diet as he deſires, and is diſcontented with it, you wil anſwer him, I marvel what you doe, what uſe you are of? Shall one that will ſit ſtill and be of no uſe? yet for all that he muſt have all his ſupply that poſſible he can deſire? Do but conſider of what uſe you are in the world; if you conſider what little need God hath of you, and what little uſe you are of, you will not be much diſcontented: If you have learned this Leſſon of ſelf-denial, though God doth cut me ſhort of ſuch and ſuch comforts, yet ſince that I doe but little, why ſhould I have much? This very thought will bring down a mans ſpirit as much as any thing.

Fourthly, *So vile I am, that I can receive no good neither of my ſelf*; I am not only an empty veſſel, but a corrupt and unclean veſſel that would ſpoil any thing that comes into it: So are all our hearts, every one of our hearts is not only empty of good, but are like a muſtie veſſel, that if any good liquor be poured into it, it ſpoiles it.

Fiftly, If God doth cleanſe us in ſome meaſure, and doth put into us ſome good liquor, ſome Grace of his Spirit, yet, *We can make uſe of nothing neither can we have it, if God doth but withdraw himſelf*: If God doth but leave us one moment, after he hath beſtowed upon us the greateſt gifts, and whatſoever abilities we can deſire, If God ſhould ſay, I wil give you them, now go and trade now I have given you theſe and theſe abilities, we cannot ſtir one foot further neither if God doth but leave us. Doth God give us gifts and parts? Then let us fear and tremble leſt God ſhould leave us to our ſelves, for then how foully ſhould we abuſe thoſe gifts and parts? You think other men and women have memory, and gifts, and parts, and you would fain have

have them. But suppose God should give you these, and there leave you, you would utterly spoile them.

Sixthly, *We are worse than nothing.* For by sin we come to be a great deal worse than nothing; sin makes us more vile than nothing, sin makes us contrary to all good: now it is a great deal worse to have a contrariety to all that is good, than meerly to have an emptinesse of all that is good; we are not empty pitchers in respect of good, but we are like pitchers filled with poison, and it is much for such as we are to be cut short of outward comforts?

In the seventh place, *If we perish there will be no losse of us.* If God should annihilate me, what losse would there be of me? God can raise up another in my place, to do him other manner of service than I have done. Now put but these seven things together and then hath Christ taught you self-deniall: I may call these the severall words in our Lesson of self-deniall; Christ teaches the soul this, so that as in the presence of God upon a real sight of it self it can say, Lord I am nothing, Lord I deserve nothing, Lord I can doe nothing, I can receive nothing, I can make use of nothing, I am worse than nothing, and if I come to nothing and perish, there will be no losse at all of me, and therefore what great matter is it for me to be cut short here? A man that is little in his own eyes, such a man or woman will account every affliction to be little, and every mercy to be great: *Saul*, There was a time (the Scripture saith) that he was little in his own eyes, and then his afflictions were but little to him, when some would not have had him to be King but spake contemptuously of him, he held his peace, but when *Saul* began to be big in his own eyes, then the affliction began to be great upon him. *There was never any such contented man or woman as this self-denying man or woman*: There was never any denied himself so much as Jesus Christ did, he gave his cheeks to the smiters, he opend not his mouth, he was as a lamb when he was led to the slaughter, he made no noise in the street; Oh he denyed himself above al, and was willing to empty himself; and so he was the most contented that ever any was in the world, and the neerer we come to learn to deny our selves as Christ did, the more contented shall we be, and by knowing much of our own vileness, we come to

learn

learne to justifie God, whatever the Lord shall lay upon us, yet righteous is the Lord, for he hath to deal with a most wretched creature. A discontented heart he is troubled because he hath no more comfort; but one that is self-denying man, he rather wonders that he hath so much as he hath: Oh such one, I have but a little: I, but such he that hath learned his lesson of self-denyal, I rather wonder that God bestows upon me the liberty of breathing in the air, knowing how vile I am, and knowing how much sin the Lord doth see in me: and that is the way of contentment by learning self-denial.

Eightly, There is a further thing in self-denyall which brings contentment, *Because thereby the soul comes to rejoice and take satisfaction in all Gods wayes*, (I beseech you observe this) If a man be selfish and have self-love prevails in his heart, those things that suits with his own ends he will be glad of them; but a godly man that hath denied himself he will suit with, and be glad of all things that shall suit with Gods ends: Saith a Gracious heart, Gods ends are my ends; and I have denyed mine owne ends, and so he comes to find contentment in all Gods ends and wayes, and his comforts are multiplied, whereas the comforts of other men are single it is but very rare that Gods ways shall suit with a mans particular ends, but alwayes Gods wayes suit with his own ends; now if you will only have contentment when Gods wayes suit with his own ends, you can have it but now and then, but a self-denying man denies his own ends and only looks at the ends of God, and therein is contented: When a man is selfish he cannot but have a great deal of trouble and vexation, for if I regard my self, my ends are so narrow that I shall have a hundred things wil come and justle me, and I cannot have room in those narrow ends of mine owne; as you know in the City what a deal of stirr there is in the narrow streets, as *Thames* street being so narrow they justle and wrangle and fight one with an other because the place is so narrow, but now in the broad streets there they can go quietly; so men that are selfish, they meet and so justle one with another, one man is for self in one thing, and another man is for self in another thing, and so they make a great deal of stir; but those whose hearts are inlarged and make publick things their ends, and can deny themselves,

themselves, they can walk at breadth and never justle one with another so as the other do. The lesson of self-denial is the first lesson that Jesus Christ doth learn men in the seeking of Gods contentment.

The second Lesson is, *The vanity of the Creature*: That is, the second Lesson in Christs School that he teaches those that he would make Scholers in this Art: The vanity of the Creature, That whatsoever there is in the Creature hath an emptiness in it, *Vanitie of vanities all is vanitie*, that is the lesson that the Wise man learned, that the creature in its selfe can do us neither good nor hurt, but it is all but as a wind, there is nothing in the creature that is suitable to a gracious heart to feed upon for the good and happiness of it. My Brethren, the reason why you have not Contentment in the things of the world, it is not because you have not enough of them, that is not the reason, but the reason is, because they are not things proportionable to that immortal soul of yours that is capable of God himself; many men think when they are troubled and have not Contentment, that it is because they have but a little in the world, and if they had more, then they should be content: That were just thus. Suppose a man is an hungry, and to satisfie his craving stomach he should gape and hold open his mouth, to take in the winde, and then should think the reason why he is not satisfied, is, because he hath not enough of the wind; no, the reason is because the things is not suitable to a craving stomach: Truly there is the same madness in the world; the Wind that a man takes in by gaping, will as soon satisfie a craving stomach which is ready to famish, as all the comforts in the world can satisfie a soul that knows what true happiness means. You would be happy, and you seek after such and such comforts in the creature; well, have you got them? do you find your heart satisfied as having that happiness that is suitable to you? No no, it is not here, but you think it is, because you want such and such things: O poor deluded man! It is not because you have not enough of it, but because it is not the thing that is proportionable to that immortal soul that God hath given you. *Why do you lay out your money for that which is not bread* (Isa. 55. 2.) *and your labour for that which satisfieth not?* You are mad people, you seek to satisfie your

stomachs with that that is not bread, your soul with the wind, you will never have Contentment, all creatures in the world say, Content-ment is not in us, riches saith Contentment is not in me, pleasure saith Contentment is not in me, if you look for Contentment in the creature you will fail; No Contentment is higher: when thou comest into the School of Christ, Christ teaches thee that there is a vanity in all things in the world, and the soul that by coming into the School of Christ, by understanding the glorious mysteries of the Gospel comes to see the vanity of all things in the world, that is the soul that comes to true Contentment. I could tel you of abundance of sentences from Heathens that shewe the vanity of all things in the world, and yet they did not learn the vanity of the creature in the right School. But now when a soul comes into the School of Jesus Christ, and there comes to see a vanity in all things in the world, there such a soul comes to have Contentment. If you seek Contentment else where, you do like the unclean spirit, seek for rest but find none.

A Third Lesson that Christ teaches a Christian when he comes into the School, is this: *He learns him to understand what that One thing is that is necessary, which he never came to understand before:* you know what he saith to *Martha, O Martha, thou cumbrest thy self about many things, but there is one thing necessary.* The soul before thought after this and the other thing, but now saith the soul I see really, that it is not necessary that I should be rich, but it is necessary that I should make up my peace with God: it is not necessary that I should live a pleasureable life in this world, but it is absolutely necessary that I should have pardon of my sins, it is not necessary that I should have honour and preferment, but it is necessary that I should have God to be my portion and have my part in Jesus Christ, it is necessary that my soul should be saved in the day of Jesus Christ: the other things are precious fine things indeed, and I should be glad if God would give them me, a fine habitation, and servants in, and cloaths, and provision for my wife and children, these are comfortable things, but these are not those necessary things: I may have these and yet perish for ever; but all other is absolutely necessary, wherefore though I be poor so as I may have that that is absolutely

lutely necessary; thus Christ instructs the soul. There is many of you have had some thoughts about this that it is indeed necessary for you to provide for your soul, but when you come into Christs School, there Christ causes the fear of eternity to fall upon you, and there he causes such a real sight of the great things of eternity and the absolute necessity of those things, that it possesses your hearts with fear, and that takes you off from all other things in the world. Now I should have shewn you how that wil bring Contentment to the soul when it comes to be instructed in the thing that is absolutely necessary, but thus much for this time.

SERMON V.

PHIL. 4. 11.

For I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be Content.

I Mentioned three Lessons the last time, that Christ teaches those Scholers that come into his School whereby they might come to get Contentment.

First, The Lesson of Self-deniall.

Secondly, The Lesson of the vanity of the Creature.

Thirdly, the right understanding of that One thing that is Necessary. A little to enlarge this one, and so to proceed to others.

It is said of *Pompey*, that when he was to carry corn to *Rome* in time of dearth, he was in a great deal of danger by storms at Sea, but saith he, We must go on, it is necessary that *Rome* should be relieved, but it is not necessary that we should live. So it would be certainly when the soul is once taken up with the things that are of absolute necessity, it wil not be much troubled

troubled about other things. What be the things that do disquiet us here, but some By-matters in this world? and is it not because our hearts are not taken up with the One Needful thing. Who are the men that are most discontented, but idle persons, persons that have nothing to take up their minds, every little thing disquiets and discontents them? But now a man that hath matters of great weight and consequence, if all things go not exactly according to his mind, he is not so much troubled, because he hath other things in his head, he is not so much at leisure to mind things in the family: but now a man that lies at home and hath nothing to do, he finds fault with every thing. So it is with the heart; when the heart of a man hath no thing to do but to be busie about Creature-comforts, every little thing troubles him; but now, when the heart is taken up with the weighty things of Eternity, the great things of eternal life, the heart being taken up with them, these things that are here below, that did disquiet it before, are things now of no consideration with him in comparison to the other, so as how things fal out here is not much regarded with him, if the *One thing that is Necessary* be provided for.

The fourth Lesson that the soul is instructed in to come to this knowledge in the Art of Contentment, is this: *The soul comes to understand in what relation it stands in here to the world*: by that I mean thus, *God comes to instruct the soul effectually through Christ by his Spirit, upon what terms it lives here in the world, in what relation it is that it doth stand*; as thus, While I live in the World my condition is to be but a pilgrime, a stranger, a traveller, and a souldier: Now the right understanding of this, and being taught this not only by rote, that I can speak the words over, but when I com indeed to have my soul possest with the consideration of this Truth, That God hath set me in this world, not as in my home, but as a meer stranger and pilgrime, that I am travelling here to another home, that I am here a souldier in my warfare; this is a mighty help to Contentment in whatsoever befalls me: as now to instance in all these conditions. When a man is at home, if he hath not things according to his desire he will be finding fault, and is not contented; but if a man travels abroad, perhaps he meets not with conveniences as he desires, the servants in the house are not at his beck, or are not so diligent

...ſhe as his own Country-woman, and he dieth as he ...
...money, and yet he accuſeth nothing, yet ſuch is the ...
...moderate ſome ſpirits are, that they will not be ...
...nothing right. I would not be ſuch a man as he, and to ſhew ...
...no manners for one to find fault when he is abroad in another ...
...bodies family though things be not ſo as in my own family; ...
...If a man meets with ill weather he muſt be content, it is Tra-...
...vellers fare ſometimes, both ſun and ſhowres, and foul weather, ...
...this is the comfort Travellers have, and we muſt be content with ...
...it, but if a man were at home and ſhould drop down in his ...
...houſe he would account it an ill thing, an affliction to him, ...
...and he cannot bear it: but when he is travelling abroad though ...
...he meet with ruin and storms he is not ſo much troubled. ...
...When you are abroad at Sea though you have not thoſe many ...
...things that you have at home, you are not troubled at it, you ...
...are contented, why? you are abroad at Sea, you are not trou-...
...bled at it, for there do arise, and though you have many things ...
...otherwiſe than you would have them at home, but ſtill you are ...
...quieted with that, you are at Sea. Mariners when they are at ...
...Sea they care not what cloaths they have, enough only ...
...to keep them and that but coarſe ones in their necks, and any ...
...mean cloaths, but they think when they come home, then they ...
...that have their fine silk ſtockings, and their faces, & their hands ...
...and their linnen, and ſhall be very curious and nice about their ...
...cloaths, and upon that thought, that it ſhall be ſo with ...
...them when they come home, and though they have nothing ...
...but ſalt meat, and ſalt and black faces, yet when they come to ...
...their houſes then they ſhall have any thing. Thus it ſhould be ...
...with us in this world: the truth is we dwell in an houſe of ...
...Sea-clay, then, we are upon a dangerous Sea in the midſt ...
...of this world, and our Heaven is Heaven, and we are here travel-...
...ling, but our home is another world, and ſome have in ...
...deed ſome more, ſome leſſer accommodation in their travelling ...
...than others, as to a great mercy of God to this Nation, ...
...in that we can travel here in ſuch a calm condition, ...
...and that they are in other Countries, and through ſuch ...
...mercy we have as great accommodation in our travelling to ...
...Heaven as England as any place under Heaven hath, but yet ...

though

though we do meet with travellers fare sometimes, yet it should not be grievous to us: The Scripture tells us plainly that we must behave our selves here but as pilgrims and strangers. In 1 Peter 2. 11. *Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers & pilgrims abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.* Consider what your condition is, you are pilgrims and strangers, do not think to satisfie your selves here. A man when he comes into an Inn, if there be a fair cupboard of plate he is not troubled that it is not his own. Why? because he is going away; so let us not be troubled when we see other men have great estates, but we have not. Why? we are going away into another Country, you are lodging here but as it were for a night, if you should live an hundred years in comparison of eternity, it is not so much as a night, it is but as you were travelling, and were come into an Inn: And were not this a madness for a man to be discontent because he hath not what he sees there, seeing it may be he is to go away again within half a quarter of an hour? So you find it in *David*, this was the argument that brought off *Davids* heart from the things of this world, and set him upon other manner of things. *Psal.* 119. 19. *I am a stranger in the earth, hide not thy Commandements from me*: I am a stranger in the earth, (what then) then Lord let me have the knowledg of thy Commandements and it's sufficient, as for the things of the earth I stand not upon them, whether I have much or little, but hide not thy Commandements from me, Lord let me know the rule that I should guide my life by.

Again, We are not only Travellers but Soldiers, this is the condition of the life in which we are here in this world, and therefore we are to behave our selves accordingly. So the Apostle makes use of this argument in writing unto *Timothy*, 2 *Tim.* 2. 3. *Thou therefore endure hardness as a good Soldier of Jesus Christ.* The very thought of the condition of a man that is a Soldier, doth stir his disquiet of heart: when he is abroad, he hath not that accommodations in his quarters as he hath in his own family, perhaps a man that had his bed and curtains drawn about him, and all accommodations in his chamber, now perhaps sometimes he must be put to lie upon straw, and he thinketh with himself, I am a Soldier and it is suitable to my condition:

dition: he must have his bed warm'd at home, but he must lie abroad in the fields when he is a Soldier; and the very thought of this condition to which he stands obliged in all things, yea, and he goes rejoycing, to think, that is no trouble to my condition in which God hath put me: so it should be with us in respect of this world. Now, would it not be an unseemly thing to see a Soldier go whining up and down with the finger in the eye, and complaining, that he had not boyling meat, meal, and his bed warm'd as he had at home. So Christians they know that they are in their warfare, they are here in this world fighting and combating with the enemies of their souls and eternal condition, and they must be willing to endure hardnesse here. The right understanding of this, that God hath put them into such a condition, is that that will content them, especially when they consider that they are certain of the victory, and that ere long they shall triumph with Jesus Christ, and then all their sorrows shall be done away, and their tears wiped from their eyes. A Soldier is content to endure hardnesse, though he knows not that he shall have the victory: but a Christian knows himself to be a Soldier, and knows that he shall conquer, and triumph with Jesus Christ to all eternity. And that's the Fourth Lesson that Christ teacheth the soul when he brings it into his School, to learn the Art of Contentment, He makes him understand that his condition in which he hath placed him, is for his withdrawing from the world.

The Fifth Lesson that Christ teaches, is this, That all that wherein consists any good that is to be enjoyed in any creature in the world, is nothing, before it hath been taught that vanity and vanity in the Creature, that is, the Creature considered in it self, but not as it is brought home to the Creator, and held in respect of him, by relying thereon for its providence, you have in some goodness in the Creature, though there be abundance there is some deficiencies: But wherein doth that consist? It consists not in the nature of the Creature in it self, for that is nothing but vanity, but the consideration of it in the dependance that it hath upon God. That is a Lesson that Christ teaches, if there be any goodness in riches, or any comfort in this world, it is not so much that it pleases my sense, when it is suitable to my

evil

anybody, but the assurance it hath to God the First being, that by these creatures there should be some what of Gods Goodness communicated to me; and I may have a sanctified use of the creature in death, me contain God, and that I may enjoy more of God, and be more serviceable for the Glory of God in the place where God hath set me, here's the good of the Creature: Oh were we but instructed in this Lesson, did we but understand, and thoroughly believe this to be truth, that there is no creature, nor all the world could hath any goodness any further than it hath reference to the first infinite Supream Good of all, that so far as I can enjoy God in it, so far it is good to me, and so far as I do not enjoy God in it, so far there is no goodness in any thing that I have in the creature, how easie were it then for one to be contented; As thus, Suppose a man had a great estate but a few years ago, and now it's all gone, I would but appeal to this man, When you had your estate wherein did you account the good of that estate to consist? a carnal heart would say, unto bodie might know what, that it brought me in so much a year, and that I could fare of the best, and be a man of note in the place where I live, and then would regard what it is, of might be thus attired as I would, and lay up portions for my children, in this consisted the good of my estate; this man now never came into the School of Christ to know wherein the good of an estate did consist, now would it not be discontent when he hath lost his estate: But now a Christian that hath been in the School of Christ, and hath been instructed in the art of Contentment, when such a one hath an estate, [illegible] and estate above my brethren, in this consisted my good and happiness, and that I have an opportunity to serve God and his people, and enjoy the comforts of Gods mercies to my soul and comfortable use of the things of this world, and hereby I am enabled to do a great deal of good, and therein I account the good of my estate: Now if God take away this estate, now if God will be pleased to make up the enjoyment of himself [illegible] to honour him by suffering, and if I may, by God's help, provide now in my way of suffering, as then in the way of the Grace of the Spirit in this way of my suffering as I did in the way of prosperity, I

have as much of God as I had before; if I may be led to God in my low condition, as much as I was in my prosperous condition, I have as much Comfort and Contentment as I had before.

Obj. But you will say, *It's true, If I could honor God in my low estate as much as in my prosperous estate, then it were somewhat; but how can that be?*

Answ. You must know, the special honor that God hath from his Creatures in this world, it is, The manifestation of the Graces of his Spirit; It's true, God hath a great deal of honor when a man is in a publick place, and so he is able to do a great deal of good, To countenance Godliness, and discountenance Sin; but the main thing is, *In our shewing forth the vertues of him that hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light.* Now if I can say, That through Gods mercy in my affliction I find the Graces of Gods Spirit working as strongly in me as ever they did when I had my estate, I am where I was, yea, I am fully in as good a condition, for I have that good now that I had in my prosperous estate, for I accounted the good of it, but in my enjoyment of God, and honoring of God, and now God hath blest the want of it to stir up the Graces of his Spirit in my Soul, and this is the work that now God calls me to; and I must account God is most honored when I do the work that he cals me to; He sets me a work in my prosperous estate at that time, to honor him in that condition; and now he sets me a-work at this time, to honor him in this condition: Now God is most honored, when I can turn from one condition to another according as he cals me to it: Would you account your selves to be honored by your servants, when you set them about a work that hath some excellency, and they wil go on, and on, and you cannot get them off from it? Now let the work be never so good, yet if you wil cal them off to another work, you do expect that they should manifest so much respect to you, as to be content to come off from that, though they be set about a meaner work, if it be more sutable to your ends. So, you were in a prosperous estate, and there God called you to some service that you took some pleasure in; but suppose God saith, I wil use you in a suffering condition, and I wil have you honor me in that way; now here's the honoring

of God that you can turn this way or that way, as God calls you to it; thus now you have learned this, That the good of the Creature consists in the enjoyment of God in it, and the honoring of God by it, you can be content, because you have the same good that you had before. And that's the Fifth Lesson.

The Sixth Lesson that Christ doth teach the soul that he brings into this School, is this; *He doth instruct such a man or woman in the knowledg of their own hearts*: you must learn this or you wil never learn Contentment; you must learn to know your own hearts wel, to be good students of your own hearts; you cannot al be Scholers in the Arts and Sciences in the world, but you may al be students in your own hearts; you cannot read in the book (many of you) but God expects that every day you should turn over a leaf in your own hearts; you wil never come to get any skil in this Mystery, except you studie the book of your own hearts: Marriners, they have their books that they study, those that wil be good Navigators; and Scholers they have their books; those that study Logick, they have their books according to that; and those that would studie Rethorick and Phylosophy have their books according to that; and those that study Divinity, they have their books whereby they come to be helped in the Studie of Divinity: but a Christian (next to the Book of God) is to look into the book of his own heart, and to read over that, and this wil help you to Contentment these three waies:

1. By the studying of thy *heart*, thou wilt come presently *to discover wherein thy discontent lies*; when thou art discontented, thou wilt find out the root of any discontentment if thou doest studie thy heart wel: many men and women they are discontented, and the truth is they know not wherefore, they think this and the other thing is the cause, but a man or woman that knows their own heart, they wil find out presently where the root of their discontent lies, that it lies in such a corruption, and distemper of my heart, that now through Gods mercy I have found out; It is in this case as it is with a little child that is very froward in the house, if a stranger comes in he doth not know what the matter is, perhaps the stranger wil give the child

child a Rattle, or a Nut, or ſuch a thing to quiet it, but when the Nurſe comes ſhe knows the temper and diſpoſition of the Child, and therefore knows beſt how to quiet it: So it is here juſt thus for al the world, when we are ſtrangers with our own hearts we are mightily diſcontented, and know not how to quiet our ſelves, becauſe we know not wherein the diſquiet lieth: And indeed when we are ſtrangers to our own hearts we cannot tel how to quiet our ſelves; but if we be very wel verſed in our own hearts, when any thing falls out ſo as to diſquiet us, we find out the cauſe of it preſently, and ſo quickly come to be quiet. So a man that hath a Watch, and he underſtands the uſe of every wheel and pin, if it goes amiſs he wil preſently find out the cauſe of it: but one that hath no skil in a Watch, when it goes amiſs he knows not what the matter is, and therefore cannot mend it. So indeed our hearts are as a Watch, and there are many wheels, and windings and turnings there, and we ſhould labour to know our hearts wel, that when they are out of tune we may know what the matter is.

2. This knowledg of our hearts wil help us to Contentment, becauſe by this *we ſhal come to know what is moſt ſutable to our condition.* As thus, A man that knows not his own heart he thinks not what need he hath of affliction, and upon that he is diſquieted; but that man or woman that hath ſtudied their own hearts when God comes with afflictions upon them, they can ſay, I would not for any thing in the world have been without this affliction, God hath ſo ſuted this affliction to my condition, and hath come in ſuch a way, that if this affliction had not come, I am afraid I ſhould have fallen into ſin; A poor ignorant man that takes Phyſick, the Phyſick works, and he thinks it wil kil him, becauſe he knows not the ill humors that are in his body, and therefore he underſtands not how ſutable the phyſick is to him; but a Phyſitian takes a purge, and it makes him extreamly ſick, ſaith the Phyſitian, I like this the better, it doth but work upon the humor that I know is the cauſe of my diſeaſe, and upon that ſuch a man that hath knowledg and underſtanding of his body, and the cauſe of his diſtemper, he is not troubled or diſquieted: So would we be if we did but

know the distempers of our own hearts; Carnal men and women they know not their own spirits, and therefore they fling and vex upon every affliction that doth befal them, they know not what distempers are in their hearts that may be healed by their afflictions, if it please God to give them a sanctified use of them.

3. By knowing their own hearts, *they know that they are able to mannage*, and by this means they come to be content; the Lord (perhaps) takes away many comforts from them that they had before, or denies them some things that they hoped to have got; now they by knowing their hearts, know this, That they were not able to mannage such an estate, and they were not able to mannage such prosperity, God saw it, and (saith a poor soul) I am in some measure convinc'd, by looking into mine own heart, that I was not able to mannage such a condition. A man desires greedily to gripe more perhaps than he is able to mannage, and so undoes himself: As Country men do observe, that if they do ever stock their Land, it wil quickly spoyl them; and so a wise Husband-man that knows how much his ground will bear, he is not troubled that he hath not so much stock as others, why? because he knows he hath not ground enough for so great a stock, and that quiets him: So many men and women that know not their own hearts, they would fain have a prosperous estate as others have, but if they knew their own hearts, they would know that they were not able to mannage it: If one of your little Children of three or four years old should be crying for the coat of her that is twelve or fourteen years old, and say, Why may not I have a coat as long as my Sisters? If she had, it would soon trip up her heels, and break her face; but when the child comes to understanding she is not discontented because her coat is not so long as her Sisters, but saith, my coat is fit for me, and therein takes content: So if we come to understanding in the School of Christ we wil not cry, Why have not I such an estate as others have? the Lord sees that I am not able to mannage it, and I see it my self by the knowing of mine own heart. You shal have children, if they see but a Knife, they wil cry for it, because they know not their strength, and that they are not able to mannage it, but you know

know they are not able to mannage it, and therefore you wil not give it them, and when they come to so much understanding as to know that they are not able to mannage it, they wil not cry for it; so we would not cry for such and such things if we knew that we were not able to mannage them: when you vex and fret for what you have not, I may say to you as Christ saith, you know not of what spirits you are. It was a speech of *Oecolampadius* to *Pirillus*, saith he (when they were speaking about his extream poverty,) *Not so poor, though I have ben very poor, yet I would be poorer, I could be willing to be poorer than I am*, for the truth is (as if he should say) the Lord knew that that was more sutable to me, and I knew that my own heart was such, that a poor condition was more sutable to me than a rich; so certainly would we say if we knew our own hearts, that such and such a condition is better for me than if it had been otherwise.

The seventh Lesson, *Is the burden of a prosperous estate.* Such a one that comes into Christs School to be instructed in this Art, never comes to attain to any great skil in this Art til he comes to understand the burden that is in a prosperous estate.

Object. You will say, What burden is there in a prosperous estate.

Answ. Yes certainly a great burden, and there needs a great strength to bear it: as men had need have strong brains that can bear strong Wine, so they had need of strong spirits that are able to bear prosperous conditions, and not to do themselves hurt; there's a fourfold burden in a prosperous estate. Many men and women look at the shine and glittering of prosperity, but they little think of the burden, but there's a fourfold burden.

1. There's *A burden of Trouble.* A Rose hath its prickles; and so the Scripture saith, *That he that wil be rich, pierceth himself through with many sorrows*, 1 Tim. 6. 10. If a mans heart be set upon it that he must be rich, and he will be rich, such a man will pierce himself through with many sorrows; he looks upon the delight and glory of riches that appears outwardly, but he considers not what piercing sorrows he may meet with-

all.

all in them: The consideration or the trouble in a prosperous condition I have divers times thought of, and I cannot tel by what similitude to express it better, than by traveling in some Champian Country, where round about is very fair and sandy ground, and you see there a Town a great way off in a bottom, and you think, O how bravely is that Town seated! but when you come and ride into the Town, you shal ride through a dirty lane, and through a company of fearful dirty holes, and you could not see the dirty lane and holes when you were two or three miles off: so sometimes we look upon the prosperity of men, and think such a man lives bravely and comfortable, but if we did but know what troubles he meets withal in his family, in his estate, in his dealings with men, we would not think his condition so happy. One may have a very fine new shoo, but no body knows where it pinches him, but he who hath it on: so you think such and such men are happy, but they may have many troubles that you little think of.

2 *There is a burden of Danger in it.* Men that are in a prosperous condition they are in a great deal of danger: you see some times in the evening when you light up your Candles, the Moths and the Gnats wil be flying up and down in the Candle but they scorch their wings, and there they fal down dead; so there is a great deal of danger in a prosperous estate, those men that are set upon a pinacle on high, these men they are in greater danger than other men are. Honey we know doth invite Bees and Wasps unto it; and so the sweet of prosperity doth invite the Devil and Temptation. Men that are in a prosperous estate, are subject to many temptations that other men are not subject to. The Scripture calls the Devil *Beel-zebub*, that is, the god of Flies; and so *Beel-zebub* comes where the honey of prosperity is: They are in very great danger of temptation that are in a prosperous condition. The dangers of men that are in a prosperous estate, that have more than others, should be considered of by those that are lower, think with thy self, Though they be above me, yet they are in more danger than I am; the tal trees are more shattered a great deal than low shrubs: so you know the ship that hath al the sails up, the top sail & al, in a storm, this is in more danger than that that hath al the sails

drawn

drawn in: And so men that have their Top-gallant, and all up and brave, they are more like to be drown'd, drown'd in perdition than other men are; and therefore you know what the Scripture saith, how hard it is for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven: such a text should make poor people to be contented with their estates. We have a notable example for that in the Children of *Kohath*, you shal find that they were in a more excellent estate than the other of the *Levites*, but they were in more danger than the other, and more trouble.

First, That the Children of *Kohath* were in a higher condition than other of the *Levites*, that I'le shew you out of the 4th of *Numb.* 4. vers. there you shall find what their condition was. *This shall be the service of the sons of* Kohath *in the Tabernacle of the Congregation about the most holy things.* Mark, the *Levites* were exercised about *holy things*; but the sons of *Kohath*, their service was about the *most holy things* of al: and you shal find in the 21. of *Joshua*, vers. 10. That God did honor the sons of *Kohath* in a more special manner than he did honor the other *Levites*, which honor the Children of *Aaron* (being of the families of the *Kohathites*, who were of the Children of *Levi*) had, for theirs was the first Lot, and they were prefer'd before the other families of *Levi*, those that were imployed in the most honorable imployment, they had the most honorable Lot, the first Lot fel to them: Thus you see God honored the Children of the *Kohathites*. But (might other *Levites* say) how hath God prefer'd this family before us? They were honored more than the other were: But now, mark their burden that comes with their Honor, and that I wil shew you out of two Scriptures, the first is, *Numb.* 7. 6,7,8,9. *And* Moses *took the Wagons and Oxen, & gave them unto the* Levites: *Two Wagons and four Oxen he gave unto the sons of* Gershom, *according to their service: & four Wagons & eight Oxen he gave unto the sons of* Merari, *according unto their service, under the hand of* Ithamer *the son of* Aaron *the Priest.* But saith he (vers. 9.) *Unto the sons of* Kohath *he gave none; because the service of the Sanctuary that belonged unto them, was, That they should bear upon their shoulders.* Mark, the other *Levites* had Oxen and Wagons given unto them, to ease them of their service: but saith he) to the sons of *Kohath* he gave none,

but

but they ſhould bear their ſervice upon their ſhouldiers; and that's the reaſon why God was ſo diſpleaſed, becauſe that they would have more eaſe in Gods ſervice than God would have them; for whereas they ſhould carry it upon their ſhoulders, they would carry it upon a cart; Mark here, you ſee the firſt burden that they had, beyound what the other *Levites* had. And thoſe indeed that are in more honorable places than others, thoſe that are under them think not of their burden that they are to carry upon their ſhoulders, when as others have means to eaſe them; and many times thoſe that are employed in the Miniſtery, or Magiſtracie, that ſit at the Stern to order the great Affairs of the Common-wealth and State, you think they live bravely: They lie awake when you are aſleep; if you knew the burden that lies upon their ſpirits, you would think that your labour and burden were very little in compariſon of theirs.

2. There's another burden of danger more than the reſt, and that you ſhal find in *Numb.* 4. 17. *And the Lord ſpake unto* Moſes *& unto* Aaron *ſaying, Cut ye not off the tribe of the families of the* Kohathites *from among the* Levites, *but thus do unto them that they may live & not die: When they approach unto the moſt holy things,* Aaron *& his Sons ſhal go in & appoint them every one to his ſervice & to his burden; but they ſhal not go in to ſee when the holy things are covered, leſt they die.* Mark this text: ſaith the Lord to *Moſes* and *Aaron,* Cut ye not off the tribe of the family of the *Kohathites* from among the *Levites.* Cut them not off, why? what had they done? had they done any thing amiſs? No, they had not done any thing that provoked God: but the meaning is this; Take a great care of the family of the *Kohathites,* to inſtruct them in their duty that they were to do; for (ſaith God) they are in a great deal of danger, being to ſerve in the moſt holy things: If they ſhould go in to ſee the holy things more than God would have them, it is as much as their lives are worth, and therefore if you ſhould but neglect them, and not inform them throughly in their duty, they would be undone: Saith God, They are to adminiſter in the moſt holy things, and if they ſhould but dare to preſume to do any thing otherwiſe than God would have them about thoſe ſervices, it would coſt them their lives; and

there

therefore be not you careles of them, for if you neglect them you will be a meane of cutting them off. Thus you see the danger that the family of the *Kathiter were in*; they were prefer'd before others, but they were in more danger. So you think there are such men in a parish that beare the sway, and are imployed in publick service, and they carry all before them; but you consider not their danger. And so the Ministers, they stand in the fore-front of all the spight and mallice of ungodly men: indeed God imploies them in a honorable service, and that service that the Angels would take delight in; but though the service be honorable, above the imployment of other works, yet the burden of danger that likewise is greater than the danger of men that are in an inferior condition. Now when the Soul comes to get wisdome from Christ to think of the danger that it is in, then it wil be content in that low estate in which it is. A poor man that is in a low condition, thinks, I am low, and others are raised, but I know not what their burden is: and so, if he be rightly instructed in the School of Christ he comes to be contented.

3. *In a prosperous estate there is the burden of Duty.* You look only at the sweet and comfort that they have, and the honor and respect that they have that are in a prosperous condition; but you must consider of the duty that they owe to God. God requires more duty at their hands than at yours; you are ready to be discontented that you have not such parts and abilities as such have, but God requires more duty of them that have more parts, God requires more duty of them that have greater estates than of you that have not such estates. Oh! you would fain have the honor, but can you carry the burden of the Duty?

4. The last is, *The burden of Account in a prosperous Estate.* There is a great account that they are to give to God that enjoy great estates & a prosperous condition. Now we are al Stewards, and one is a Steward to a meaner man, perhaps but an ordinary Knight; another is a Steward to a Noble man, an Earl: now the Steward of the meaner man, he hath not so much as the other hath under his hand: now shall he be discontented because there comes not so much under his hand as under the

others? No thinks he, I have less, and I am to give the less account. So your account in comparison of the Ministers and Magistrates will be nothing; you are to give an account of your own souls, and so are they; but you are to give an account for your own family, and so are they; but you are not to give account for Congregations, and for Towns, and Cities, and Countries. You think of Princes and Kings, Oh! what a glorious condition they are in. But what do you think of a King to give account for all the disorder and wickedness in a Kingdom that he possibly might have prevented? What abundance of Glory might a Prince bring to God if so be that he bent his soul and all his thoughts to lift up the Name of God in a Kingdom; now what God loses for want of this, that King, Prince, or Governor he must give an account for. It's a speech of *Chrysostome* in that place of the *Hebrews*, where it's said that men must give an account for their souls, he wonders that any men in publick place can be saved, because their account is so great that they are to give. And I remember I have read a speech of *Philip* that was King of *Spain*, (though the story saith of him, that he had such a natural conscience, that he profest he would not do any thing against his conscience, no not in secret for the gaining of the world, yet when this man was to die) Oh saith he, that I had never been a King; Oh that I had liv'd a solitary and private life as my dares; then should I have died a great deal more securely, I should with more confidence have gone before the Throne of God to give my account: but here's the fruit of my Kingdom, that I had all the glory of it, it hath made my account to be harder to give to God: and thus he cries out when he was to die. And therefore you that live in private conditions remember this, If you come into Christ's School, and be taught this Lesson, you wil be quiet in your afflictions, or private estate, in regard your account is not so great as others. It's a speech I remember I have met withal in *Latimers* Sermons that he was wont to cite, *That half is more than the whole*. That is, when a man is in a mean condition, he is but half way towards the height of prosperitie that others are in: yet saith he, this is more safe though it be a meaner condition than others. Those that are in a high and prosperous condition,

on, there is anexed to the burden of trouble, and of danger, and of duty, and of account. And thus you see how Christ trains up his Scholers in his School, and though they be weak otherwise, yet by his Spirit he gives them wisdom to understand these aright.

The eight Lesson is this, *Christ teaches them what a great and dreadful evil it is to be given up to ones hearts desires.* The understanding this Lesson that it is a most dreadful evil, one of the most hideous and fearful evils that can befal any man upon the face of the Earth, for God to give him up to his hearts desires: when the soul understands this once, and together with it, (for it goes along together) that spiritual Judgments are more fearful than any outward judgments in the world, the understanding of this wil teach any one to be content in Gods crossing of them in their desires. Thou art croſt in thy desires, now thou art discontented and vext and fretted at it, Is that thy only miserie that thou art croſt in thy desires? No no, thou art infinitly mistaken, the greatest miserie of all is, for God to give thee up to thy hearts lusts and desires, to give thee up to thine own counsels: so you have it in *Psal.* 81. 11. 12. *But my people would not hearken to my voice, and Israel would none of me,* [what then?] *So I gave them up unto their own hearts lusts, and they walked in their own counsels.* Oh saith *Bernard*, Let me not have such a misery as that is, for to give me what I would have, to give me my hearts desires, it is one of the most hideous judgments in the world for a man to be given up to his hearts desires. We have not indeed in Scripture any certain evident sign of a Reprobate, we cannot say (except we knew a man had committed the sin against the holy Ghost) that he is a Reprobate, for we know not what God may work upon him; but the neerest of al, and the blackest sign of a Reprobate is this, for God to give up a man to his hearts desires, all the pain of diseases, al the calamities that can be thought of in the world, are no Judgments in comparison of this, for a man to be given up to his hearts desires; now when the soul comes to understand this, the soul then cries out, Why am I so troubled that I have not my desires? There is nothing that God conveys his wrath more through than a prosperous estate.

I remember I have read of a Jewish Tradition that they say of *Uzziah*, when God struck *Uzziah* with a Leprosie, they say that the beams of the Sun was darted upon the forehead of *Uzziah*, and he was struck with a Leprosie with the darting of the beams of the Sun upon his fore-head; the Scripture saith, Indeed the Priests looked upon him; but they say there was a special light and beam of the Sun upon the fore head that did discover the Leprosie to the Priests, and they say it was the way of conveying of it. Whether that were true or no, I am sure this is true, that the strong beams of the Sun of prosperity upon many men maks them to be leprous; Would any poor man in the Country have been discontented that he was not in *Uzziahs* condition? He was a great King. But there was the Leprosie in his fore-head; the poor man may say, though I live meanly in the Country, yet I thank God my body is whol and sound, would not any man rather have russet and skins of beasts to cloath him with, than to have sattin and velvet that should have the plague in it? The Lord conveyes the Plague of his curse through prosperity, as much as through any thing in the world, and therefore the soul coming to understand this, this makes it to be quiet and content.

And then, *Spiritual Judgments are the greatest Judgments of all*; the Lord laies such an affliction upon my outward estate, but what if he had taken away my life? A mans health is a greater mercy than his estate; and you that are poor people you should consider of that; But is the health of a mans body better than his estate? what is the health of a mans soul? that's a great deal better; the Lord hath inflicted external judgements, but he hath not inflicted spiritual Judgments upon thee, he hath not given thee up to hardness of heart, and taken away the spirit of prayer from thee in thine afflicted estate, Oh then be of good comfort though there be outward afflictions upon thee, yet thy soul, thy more excellent part is not afflicted. Now when the soul comes to understand this, that here lies the sore wrath of God, to be given up to a mans desires, and for Spiritual Judgments to be upon a man, this quiets him, and contents him, though outward afflictions be upon him; perhaps one of a mans children hath the fit of an ague, or the tooth-

tooth-ach, but perhaps his next neighbor hath the plague, or all his children are dead of the plague, now shall he be so discontented, because his children have the tooth-ach when his neighbors children are dead? Now think thus, Lord thou hast laid an afflicted condition upon me, but Lord thou hast not given me the plague of a hard heart. Now take these eight things before mentioned, and lay them together, and you may well apply that Scripture in *Isa.* 29. the last verse, saith the text there *They also that erred in Spirit, shal come to understanding; and they that murmured shal learn Doctrine.* Hath there been any of you (as I fear many may be found) that have erred in spirit, even in regard of this truth that now we are preaching of, and many that have murmured, Oh that this day you might come to understand, that Christ would bring you into his School, and teach you understanding, *And they that murmured shal learn Doctrine*: what Doctrine shal they learn? These eight Doctrines that I have opened to you. And if you wil but throughly studie these lessons that I have set before your eyes: it wil be a special help and means to cure your murmuring against, and repinings at the hand of God: And so you will come to learn Christian Contentment. The Lord teach you throughly by his Spirit these Lessons of Contentment.

SER-

SERMON VI. *At* Stepney, *Aug.* 31. 1645.

PHIL. 4. 11.

For I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

I Shall only ad one Lesson more in learning of Contentment, & then I shal come to the Fourth Head, The Excellency of Contentment.

The Ninth and last Lesson that Christ teaches those that he doth instruct in this Art of Contentment, *It is the right knowledge of Gods Providence*, and therein are these Four things.

1. *The Universality of Providence*, that the soul must be throughly instructed in to come to this Art, to understand the Universality of Providence, that is; how the Providence of God goes through the whol world, extends its self to every thing: Not only that God by his providence doth rule the world, and governal things in general, but that it reaches to every particular, not only to Kingdoms, to order the great affairs of Kingdoms, but it reaches to every mans Family, it reaches to every person in the Family, it reaches to every condition, yea, to every passage, to every thing that falls out concerning thee in every particular, not one hair falleth from thy head, not a Sparrow to the ground without the providence of God. There's nothing befals thee, good or evil, but there is a providence of the Infinite Eternal First-being in that thing, and therein indeed is Gods Infiniteness, that it reaches to the least things, to the least worm that is under thy feet: Then much more it reaches unto thee that art a rational Creature, the Providence of God is more special towards rational Creatures than any others: The understanding in a spiritual

ritual way the universality of providence in every particular passage from morning to night every day; that there's not any thing that doth befal thee, but there's a hand of God in it, it is from God, it is a mighty furtherance to Contentment. Every man will grant the truth of the thing that it is so, but as the Apostle saith in *Heb.* 11. 3. *By faith we understand that the worlds were made*, by faith we understand it; why by faith? we can understand by reason that no finite thing can be from it self, And therefore that the world could not be of its self, but we can understand it by faith in another manner than by reason. So whatsoever we understand of God in way of providence, yet when Christ doth take us into his School we come to understand it by faith in a better manner than we do by reason.

2. *The efficacy that there is in providence*; that is, That the providence of God goes on in al things with strength and power, and it is not to be altered by our power; let us be discontented and vext and troubled, and fret, and rage, yet we must not think to alter the course of providence by our discontent. Some of *Jobs* friends said to him, *Shal the earth be forsaken for thee, and shal the rock be removed out of his place?* *Job*, 18. 4. when they saw him to be impatient. So I may say to every discontented impatient heart, What, shal the providence of God change its course for thee? Do'st thou think it such a weak thing that because it doth not please thee it must alter its course? Be thou content or not content, the providence of God will go on, it hath an efficacie of power and vertue, to carry all things before it: Canst thou make one hair black or white with all the sin that thou keepest? When you are in a ship at Sea that hath all her Sails spread with a full gale of wind, and swiftly sailing; can you make it stand still with running up and down in the Ship? No more can you make the providence of God to alter and change its course with your vexing and fretting, but it will go on with power do what thou canst. Do but understand the power and efficacie of providence and it will be a mighty means for the helping to learn this lesson of Contentment.

3. *The infinite variety of the works of providence*, & yet *the or-*

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der of things, one working towards another; there is infinite varietie of the works of God in an ordinary providence, and yet al work in an ordinary way; we put these two together, for God in the way of his providence causes a thousand thousand things one to depend upon another, there are infinite several wheels (as I may so say) in the works of providence, all the works that ever God did from al eternitie or ever wil do, put them al together, and all make up but one work, and they have been as several wheels that have had their orderly motion to attain the end that God from al eternity hath appointed: We indeed look at things by pieces, we look at one particular and do not consider the reference that one thing hath to another; but God he looks at all things at once, and sees the reference that one thing hath to another: As a child that looks upon a Clock, looks first upon one wheel, and then upon another wheel, he looks not at al together, or the dependance that one hath upon another, but the workman hath his eyes upon al together and sees the dependance of al one upon another, and the art that there is in the dependance one upon another; so it is in Gods providence. Now observe how this works to Contentment; where there is such a passage of providence befals me, that's one wheel, and it may be if this wheel should be stopt, there might a thousand other wheels come to be stopt by this: as in a Clock, stop but one wheel and you stop every wheel, because they have dependance one upon another: so when God hath ordered a thing for the present to be thus and thus, how do'st thou know how many things do depend upon this thing? God may have some work that he hath to do twenty yeers hence that may depend upon this passage of providence, that fals out this day, or this week. And here (by the way) we may see a great deal of evil that there is in discontent, for thou wouldest have Gods providence altered in such and such a particular, indeed if it were only in that particular, and that had reference to nothing else it were not so much, but by thy desire to have thy will in such a particular, it may be thou wouldest cross God in a thousand things that he hath to bring about, because it's impossible there may be a thouland things depend upon that one thing that thou wouldest fain

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have to be otherwise than it is; just as if a child should cry out and say, Let but that one wheel stop; though he saith but one wheel, yet if that stop, it is as much as if he should say, they must all stop: So in providence, let but this one passage of Providence, it is as much as if a thousand stopt: Let me therefore be quiet and content, for though I be croſt in some one particular God attains his end, at least his end may be furthered in a thousand things by this one thing that I am croſt in; therefore let a man consider, this is an act of providence, and how do I know what God is about to do, and how many things depend upon this providence? Now we are willing to suffer our friends will to be croſt in one thing, so that our friend may attain to what he desires in a thousand things: If thou hast a love and friendship to God, be willing to be croſt in some few things, that the Lord may have his Work go on in the universal, in a thousand of other things. That's the third thing to be understood in Gods providence, that Christ doth learn those that he teacheth in the Art of Contentment.

4. Christ teacheth them the knowledg of Providence, that is, *The knowledg of Gods usual way in his dealing with his People more particularly.* The other is, The knowledg of God in his Providence in general: But the right understanding of the way of God in his providence towards his People and Saints, is a notable Lesson to help us in the Art of Contentment. If we come once to know a mans way and course, we may better sute and be contented to live with him than before we came to know this way and course: As when a man comes to live in a society with men and women, it may be the men and women may be good, but till a man comes to know their way and course and disposition, many things may fall very croſs, and we think they are very hard, but when we come to be acquainted with their way and spirit, then we can sute and concur with them very well? and the reason of our trouble is, because we do not understand their way. So it is with you, those that are but as strangers to God, and do not understand the way of God, they are troubled with the providences of God, and they think them very strange and cannot tell what to make of them, because they understand not the ordinary course and way of

God towards his People. If a stranger sometimes come into a familie, and sees such and such things done, he wonders what the matter is, but those that are acquainted with it, it troubles them not at all; So servants, when they come first together and know not one another, it may be they are froward and discontented, but when they come to be acquainted with one anothers waies, then they are more contented: Just so it is when we come first to understand Gods waies.

Object. But you will say, *What do you understand by Gods waies?*

Answ. By that I mean these three things. And when we come to know them, we shall not wonder so much at the providence of God, but be quiet and contented with them.

1. The first thing is this: *Gods ordinary course is, That his people in this world should be in an afflicted condition*: God hath revealed in his Word, and we may there find he hath set it down to be his ordinarie way, even from the beginning of the world to this day, (but more especially in the times of the Gospel) that his People here should be in an afflicted condition. Now men that do not understand this, they stand & wonder to hear of the People of God that they are afflicted, and the enemies prosper in their way; for those that seek God in his way, and seek for Reformation, for them to be afflicted, routed and spoiled, and the enemies to prevail they wonder at it: But now, one that is in the School of Christ, he is taught by Jesus Christ, that God by his eternal Counsels hath set this to be his course and way, to bring up his People in this world in an afflicted condition, and therefore saith the Apostle, *Account it not strange concerning the fiery tryal*, 1 Pet. 4. 12. We are not therefore to be discontented with it, seeing God hath set such a course and way, and we know such is the will of God that it should be so.

The Second thing that is in Gods way is this, *Usually when God intends the greatest mercy to any of his People, he doth bring them into the lowest condition.* God doth seem to go quite crosse and work in a contrary way; when he intends the greatest mercies to his People, he doth first usually bring them into very low conditions, if it be a bodily mercy, an outward mercy that he intends to bestow, he useth to bring them bodily low, and outwardly

wardly low, if it be a mercie in their estates that he intends to bestow, he brings them low in that, and then raises them; and in their names he brings them low there, and then raises them; and in their spirits, God doth ordinarily bring their spirits low, and then raises their spirits; usually the People of God before the greatest comforts, have the greatest afflictions and sorrows, now those that understand not Gods waies they think that when God brings his people into sad conditions, that God leaves and forsakes them, and that God doth intend no great matter of good to them; but now a Child of God that is instructed in this way of God, he is not troubled; my condition is very low, but (saith he) this is Gods way when he intends the greatest mercy, to bring me under the greatest afflictions. When he intended to raise *Joseph* to be the Second in the Kingdom, God cast him into a dungeon a little before. So when God intended to raise *David* and set him upon the Throne, he made him to be hunted as a Partridg in the mountains, 2 *Sam.* 26. 20. God went this way with his Son; Christ himself went into glory by suffering, *Heb.* 2. 20. And if God deal so with his own Son, much more with his People; As a little before break of day you shall observe it is darker than it was any time before; so God doth use to make our conditions darker a little before the mercy come. When God bestowed the last great mercy at *Naxby*, we were in a very low condition, God knew what he had to do before-hand, he knew that his time was coming for great mercies; it is the way of God to do so. Be but instructed aright in this course and tract that God uses to walk in; and that will help us to Contentment exceedingly.

The Third thing that there is in Gods way and course is this, *It is the way of God to work by contraries, to turn the greatest evil into the greatest good.* To grant great good after great evil is one thing, and to turn great evils into the greatest good that's another; and yet that's Gods way, the greatest good that God intends for his People, many times he works it out of the greatest evil, the greatest light is brought out of the greatest darkness: and *Luther* (I remember) hath a notable expression for this, (saith he) it is the way of God, he doth humble

that he might exalt, he doth kill that he might make alive, he doth confound that he might glorifie; this is the way of God saith he; but (saith he) every one doth not understand this, this is the Art of Arts, and the Science of Science, the knowledge of knowledges to understand this, that God doth use when he will bring life, he doth use to bring it out of death, he brings joy out of sorrow, and he brings prosperity out of adversity, yea, and many times he brings grace out of sin, that is, makes use of sin to work furtherance of grace; it is the way of God to bring good out of evil; not only to overcome the evil, but to make the evil to work towards good: here's the way of God: now when the soul comes to understand this, it will take away our murmuring, and bring Contentment into our spirits: But I fear there are but few that understand it aright, perhaps they read of such things, and hear of such things in a Sermon, but they are not by Jesus Christ instructed in this, that this is the way of God, To bring the greatest good out of the greatest evil.

Thus having dispacht the Third Head, the Lessons that we are to learn; we come to the Fourth, and that is, *The excellency of this Grace of Contentment*: And there is a great deal of excellency in Contentment; that's a kind of Lesson too for us to learn. And this Head likewise will be somewhat long.

Saith the Apostle, *I have learned*. As if he should say, Blessed be God for this: Oh! it is a mercy of God to me that I have learned this Lesson, I find so much good in this Contentment, that I would not for a world but have it: (I have learned it saith he.)

Now the very Heathens had a sight of a great Excellency that there is in Contentment. I remember I have read of *Antisthenes* a Phylosopher, that desired of his Gods (speaking after the Heathenish way) nothing in this world to make his life happy, but CONTENTMENT; and if he might have any thing that he would desire to make his life happy, he would ask of them, That he might have the spirit of *Socrates*, that he might have such a spirit as *Socrates* had, to be able to bear any wrong, any injuries;

injuries that he met withal, and to continue in a quiet temper of spirit whatsoever befel him; for what was the temper of *Socrates*, whatever befel him he continued the same man, whatever cross befel him no body could perceive any alteration of his spirit, though never so great crosses did befal him. This a Heathen did attain to by the strength of Nature, and a common work of the spirit: Now this *Antisthenes* saw such an excellency in this spirit: As when God said to *Solomon*, What shall I give thee? he asked of God wisdom: so saith he, If the gods should put it to me to know what I would have, I would desire this thing, that I might have the spirit of *Socrates*: he saw a great excellency that there was in this And certainly a Christian may see abundance of excellency in it: I shall labor to set it out to you in this Sermon that you may be in love with this Grace of Contentment.

In the first place, *By Contentment we come to give God that Worship that is due to him*: It is a special part of Divine Worship that we owe to God, If we be content in a Christian way according as hath been opened to you; I say it is a special part of the Divine Worship that the Creature ows to the infinite Creator, in that I do tender that respect that is due from me to the Creator. The words that the Greeks have that signifies to Worship it is as much as to come and crouch before another, as a dog should come crouching unto you, and be willing to lie down at your feet; so the creature in the apprehension of its own baseness, and the infinite Excellency that there is in God above it; when it comes to worship God, it comes and crouches to this God, and it lies down at the feet of God, then doth the Creature worship God. When you see a dog come crouching to you, and can you make him withholding your hand ever him to lie down at your feet; then consider, this should you do before the Lord, you should come crouching to him, and lie down at his feet even upon your backs or bellies, to lie down in the dust before him, (so as to be willing that he should do with you what he will) as sometimes you may turn a dog this way and that way up and down with the hand, and there he lies before you, according to your fleering him with your hand: So when the Creature shall come and lie down thus before

See this opened at large in Gospel worship o Levit. 10.

fore the Lord, then a Creature worships God, doth render you that worship that is due to God. Now in what disposition of heart do we thus crouch to God more, than when we have this Contentation in all conditions that God disposed us unto? This is a crouching unto Gods dispose, to be like the poor woman of *Canaan*, when Christ said, it is not fit to give Childrens meat to dogs, but (saith she) the dogs have crums. I am a dog I confess, I but let me have but a crum. And so when the soul shall be in such a disposition as to lie down and say, Lord, I am but as a dog, yet let me have a crum, then doth it highly honor God. It may be some of you have not your table spread as others have, but God gives you crums; now saith the poor woman, dogs have crums, and when you can find your hearts thus subjecting unto God, to be but as a dog, and can be contented and bless God for any crum, I say, this is a great worship of God, you worship God by this more than when you come to hear a Sermon, or spend half an hour, or an hour in prayer, or when you come to receive a Sacrament; These are the Acts of Gods Worship, I but these are but external Acts of Worship, to Hear, and Pray, and receive Sacraments: But now this is the Soul-worship, to subject its self thus to God. You that often will-worship God by Hearing, and Praying, and receiving Sacraments, and yet afterwards will be froward and discontented, know, that God regards not that worship, he will have the Soul-worship in his subjecting of the soul to God. Observe it I beseech you; in active Obedience, there we worship God by doing that that pleases God, but by passive Obedience we do as well worship God by being pleased with that which God doth. Now when I perform a duty, I worship God, I do what pleases God: why should I not as well worship God when I am pleased with what God doth? As it was said of Christs obedience, Christ was active in his passive obedience, and passive in his active obedience: So the Saints they are passive in their active obedience, they are first passive in their reception of Grace, and then active. And when they come to passive obedience they are active, they put forth Grace in active obedience, when they perform actions to God, then saith the Soul, Oh! that I could do this that pleases God, when they

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come to ſuffer any croſs, Oh that what God doth might pleaſe me. I labor to do what pleaſes God, and I labor that what God doth ſhall pleaſe me, here's a Chriſtian indeed that ſhall endeavour both theſe: now this is but one ſide of a Chriſtian, to endeavor to do what pleaſes God, but you muſt as well endeavor to be pleaſed with what God doth, and ſo you ſhall come to be a compleat Chriſtian when you can do both. And that's the firſt thing in the excellency of this Grace of Contentment.

The ſecond thing in opening of this Excellency of Contentment is, *That in Contentment there is much exerciſe of Grace*, There is much ſtrength of Grace, yea, there is much beauty of Grace in Contentment, there is much exerciſe of Grace, ſtrength of Grace, and beauty of Grace, I put all theſe together.

1. *Much exerciſe of Grace*, There is a compoſition of Grace in Contentment, there is faith, and there is humility, and love, and there is patience, and there is wiſdom, and there is hope, all Graces almoſt are compounded, it's an oyl that hath the ingrediens of all kind of graces, and therefore though you cannot ſee the particular Grace, yet in this oyl you have it all; God ſees the Graces of his Spirit exerciſed in a ſpecial manner, and this pleaſes God at the heart to ſee the Graces of his Spirit exerciſed. In ſome one action that you do you may exerciſe ſome one grace eſpecially, but now in Contentment you exerciſe a great many Graces at once.

2. *There is a great deal of ſtrength of Grace in Contentment.* It argues a great deal of ſtrength in the body, the body to be able to endure hard weather and whatſoever falls out, and yet not to be much altered by it; ſo it argues ſtrength of Grace to be content: You that complain of weakneſs of memory, and weakneſs of parts, you cannot do what others do in other things, but have you this gracious Heart-contentment, that hath been opened to you? I know that you have attained to ſtrength of Grace in this, when it is ſo ſpiritual as hath been opened to you in the explication of this point. As it is with a mans brain, if a man be diſtempered in his body and hath many obſtructions in his body, hath an ill ſtomach, and his ſpleen

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and liver obstructed, and yet for all this his brain is not distempered, it is an argument of a great strength of brain, and though there be many ill fumes that riseth from his corrupt stomach, yet still his brain is not distempered, but he continues in the free exercise of the use of his reason and understanding; every one may understand that this man hath a very strong brain, that such things shall not distemper him, whereas other people that have a weak brain, if they do not digest but one meals meat, the fumes that do arise from their stomachs, doth distemper their brain, and makes them unfit for every thing, whereas you shall have others that have strong heads, and strong brains, though their stomachs be ill that they do not digest meat, yet still they have the free use of their brain, this argues strength: So it is in a mans spirit, you shall have many that have weak spirits, and if they have any ill fumes, if accidents befall them, you shall presently have them out of temper, but you shall have other men that though things do fume up, yet still they keep in a steady way, and have the use of reason and of other graces, and possess their souls with patience. As I remember it's reported of the Eagle, it's not like other Fowls, other Fowls when they are hungry make a noise, but the Eagle is never heard to make a noise though it wants food, and it's from the magnitude of his spirit that it will not make such complaints as other Fowls will do when they want food, it is because it is above hunger, and above thirst: So it is an argument of a gracious magnitude of spirit, that whatsoever befals it, yet it is not alwaies whining and complaining so as others are, but goes on still in its way and course, and blesses God and keeps in a constant tenour whatsoever thing befals it: such things as causes others to be dejected, and fretted and vexed, and takes away all the comfort of their lives, it makes no alteration at all in the spirits of these men and women, I say this is a sign of a great deal of strength of Grace.

3. *It's also an argument of a great deal of beauty of Grace.* It's a speech that *Seneca* a Heathen once had saith he, When you go abroad into groves and woods; and there you see the tallness of the trees and their shadows, it strikes a kind of awful fear of a Deity in you, and when you see the vast rivers and fountains,

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and deep waters that ſtrikes a kind of fear of a God in you, but (ſaith he) do you ſee a man that is quiet in tempeſts, and that lives happily in the midſt of adverſities, why do not you worſhip that man? he doth think him a man even to be honored that ſhall be quiet and live a happy life though in the middeſt of adverſities. The Glory of God appeares here more than in any of his Works? there is no Works that God hath made, the Sun, Moon, and Stars, and all the world wherein ſo much of the Glory of God doth appear, as in a man that lives quietly in the midſt of adverſity. That was that that convinc'd the King, when he ſaw the three children could walk in the midſt of the fiery furnace and not be touch'd, the King was mightily convinc'd by this, that ſurely their God was a great God indeed, and that they were highly beloved of their God that could walk in the midſt of the furnace and not be touch't, whereas the others that came but to the mouth of the furnace were devoured; ſo when a Chriſtian can walk in the midſt of fiery trials, and not his garments ſinged, but have comfort and joy in the midſt of all (as *Paul* in the ſtocks) can ſing, (that wrought upon the Jaylor:) ſo it will convince men when they ſee the power of Grace in the middeſt of afflictions, ſuch afflictions as would make others to roar under them, yet they can behave themſelves in a gracious and holy manner; Oh! it's the glory of a Chriſtian. It is that that is ſaid to be the glory of Chriſt, (for ſo by Interpreters it is thought to be meant of Chriſt) In *Micah.* 5. 5. *And this man* (the text ſaith) *ſhall be the peace, when the Aſſyrian ſhal come into our Land, & when he ſhal treade in our Pallaces.* This man ſhall be the peace when the Aſſyrian ſhall come into our Land; for one to be in peace when there is no Enemies, it's no great matter, but ſaith the text when the Aſſyrian ſhall come into our Land, then this man ſhall be the peace; that is, when all ſhal be in an hubbub and uproar, yet then this man ſhal be peace. That's the tryal of Grace when you find Jeſus Chriſt in your hearts to be peace, when the Aſſyrian ſhall come into the Land. You may think you find peace in Chriſt when you have no outward troubles, but is Chriſt your peace when the Aſſyrian comes into the Land, when the Enemy comes? Suppoſe you ſhould hear the enemy come marching to the City, and had taken

the Works, and were plundering, what would be your peace? Jesus Christ would be peace to the soul, when the enemy comes into the City, and into your houses: If there be any of you that have been where the enemy hath come, What hath been the peace of your souls? That which is said of Christ may be applied to this grace of Contentment, when the *Assyrian*, the Plunderers, the Enemies, when any affliction, trouble or distress doth befal such a heart, then this Grace of Contentment brings peace to the soul; at that time brings peace to their soul, when the *Assyrian* comes into the Land. The Grace of Contentment it's an excellent Grace, there's much beauty, much strength in it; there is a great deal of worth in this Grace, and therefore be in love with it.

The Third thing in the Excellency of Contentment, is this: *By Contentment the soul is fitted to receive mercy, and to do service.* I'le put these two together, Contentment makes the soul fit to receive mercy, and to do service; no man or woman in the world is so fit for to receive the Grace of God, and to do the Work of God, as those that have contented spirits.

1. *Those are fitted to receive mercy from the Lord that are contented*: as now; If you would have a vessel to take in any liquor, you must hold the vessel still, if the vessel stir and shake up & down you cannot powr in any thing, but you will bid, hold still that you may powr it in, and not lose any: So, if we would be the vessels to receive Gods mercy, and would have the Lord powr in his mercy to us, we must have quiet, still hearts, we must not have hearts hurrying up and down in trouble, discontent, and vexing, but we must have still and quiet hearts if we would receive mercy from the Lord: If a child flings and throws up and down for a thing, you will not give it him then when he cries to, but first you will have the child quiet; though perhaps you do intend the child shall have the thing he cries for, but you will not give it him till he is quiet, and comes and stands still before you and is contented without it, and then you will give it him: And truly so doth the Lord deal with us, (for our dealings with him are just as your froward children are with you) as soon as you would have a thing from God, if you have it not you are disquieted presently and all in an uproar (as it were)

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in your spirits: God intends mercy to you, but saith God, you shall not have it yet, I will see you quiet first, and then in the quietness of your hearts, come to me and see what I will do with you. I appeal to you, you that are any waies acquainted with the waies of God, Have you not found this to be the way of God towards you, when you have been troubled for want perhaps of some Spiritual comfort, and your hearts were vext at it, you get nothing from God all that while; but now, if you have got your heart into a quiet frame, and can say, Well, it's fit the Lord should do with his poor creatures what he will, I am under his feet, and am resolv'd to do what I can to honor him; and let him do with me what he will, I will seek him as long as I live, I will be content with what God gives, and whether he gives or no I will be content; yea, are you in this frame saith God? now you shall have comfort, now I will give you the mercy. A prisoner must not think to get off his fetters by pulling and tearing, he may gall his flesh and rend it to the very bone, certainly he will be unfettered never the sooner, but if he would have his fetters taken off, he must quietly give up himself to some man to take them off. If a begger after he hath knockt once or twice at the door and you come not, and thereupon he is vext and troubled and thinks much that you let him stand a little while without any thing, you think that this begger is not fit to receive an alms; but if you hear two or three Beggers at your door, and if you hear them out of your window say, Let us be content to stay, perhaps they are busie, it is fit that we should stay, it's well if we have any thing at last, we deserve nothing at all, and therefore we may well wait a while; you would then quickly send them an alms: So God deals with the heart, when it is in a disquiet way, then God doth not give; but when the heart lies down quietly under Gods hand, then is the heart in a fit frame to receive mercy: *Your strength shall be, to sit still* saith God; you shal not be delivered from *Babylon* but by your sitting still.

2. As fit to receive mercy, *so fit to do service*; Oh! the quiet fruits of Righteousness, the peaceable fruits of Righteousness; they indeed do prosper and multiply most when they come to be peaceable fruits of Righteousness. As the Phylosophers say

of every thing that moves, nothing that moves but it moves upon ſomething that is immovable; as a thing that moves upon the earth, if the earth were not ſtill it could not move.

Object. The Ships move upon the Sea, and that is not ſtill.

Anſw. But the Seas they move upon that which is ſtill and immovable, there is nothing moves but it hath ſomething immovable that doth uphold it: the wheels in a Coach they move up and down, but the axle-tree that moves not up and down; ſo it is with the heart of a man. As they ſay of the Heaven, it moves up and down upon a Pole that is immovable: ſo it is in the heart of a man, if he will move to do ſervice to God he muſt have a ſteady heart within him, that muſt help him to move in the ſervice of God, thoſe that have unſteady diſquiet ſpirits that have no ſteadfaſtneſs at all in them, they are not fit to do ſervice for God, but ſuch as have ſteadfaſtneſs in their ſpirits they are men and women fit to do any ſervice, and that's the reaſon that when the Lord hath any great work for any ſervants of his to do, uſually he doth firſt quiet their ſpirits, he doth bring their ſpirits into a quiet ſweet frame to be contented with any thing, and then he ſets them about imployment.

The fifth excellency is this, *Contentment it doth deliver us from abundance of temptations.* Oh the temptations that men of diſcontented ſpirits are ſubject to. The Devil loves to fiſh in troubled waters. That's our proverb of men and women, their diſpoſition is to fiſh in troubled waters, they ſay it is good fiſhing in troubled wates, this is the maxim of the Devil, he loves to fiſh in troubled waters, where he ſees the ſpirits of men and women troubled and vext, there the Devil comes, ſaith he, there's good fiſhing for me, when he ſees men and women go diſcontented up and down and he can get them alone, then he comes with his temptations, ſaith he, Will you ſuffer ſuch a thing? take ſuch a ſhifting indirect way, do not you ſee how poor you are, others are brave, you know not what you ſhall do againſt winter, to provide fewel and get bread for you and your children, and ſo he tempts them to unlawful courſes: this is the ſpecial diſtemper that the Devil faſtens upon, when he

he brings men and women to give up their ſouls to him, it is upon diſcontent: That's the ground of all thoſe that have been witches, and ſo have given up themſelves to the Devill, the riſe of it hath been their diſcontent, and therefore it is obſervable that thoſe the Devill worketh upon to make them witches, uſually they are old and melancholly people, and women eſpecially, and thoſe that are of the poorer ſort that are diſcontent at home, their neighbours trouble them and vex them, and their ſpirits are weak and they cannot bear it, ſo upon that the Devill faſtens his temptations and draws them to any thing, if they be poor, then he promiſes them money, if they have revengeful ſpirits, then he tells them that he will revenge them upon ſuch and ſuch perſons, now this quiets and contents them. Oh! there's matter of temptation for the Devil where he meets with a diſcontented ſpirit. As *Luther* ſaith of God, God doth not dwell in *Babylon*, but in *Salem*, *Babylon* ſignifies confuſion, and *Salem* ſignifies peace, now God doth not dwell in ſpirits that are in a confuſion, but he dwells in peaceable and quiet ſpirits, Oh if you would free your ſelves from temptations labour for Contentment: It is the peace of God that guards the heart from temptation. I remember I have read of one *Marius Curio* that when he had bribes ſent him to tempt him to be unfaithful to his Country, he was ſitting at home at dinner with a diſh of turnips, and they came and promiſed him rewards, ſaith he that man that can be contented with this fare that I have, will not be tempted with your rewards, I thank God I am content with this fare, and as for rewards let them be offered to thoſe that cannot be content to dine with a diſh of turnips: So the truth is we ſee it apparently, that the reaſon why many do betray their truſt, as in the Parliament ſervice and Kingdom, becauſe they cannot be contented to be in a low condition. Let a man be contented to be in a low condition, and to go meanly cloathed if God ſees it fit, ſuch a man is ſhot-free (as I may ſo ſay) from thouſands of temptations of the Devill, that do prevail againſt others to the damning of their ſouls: Oh in ſuch times as theſe are when men are in dangers of the loſs of their eſtates, I ſay theſe men that have not got this grace are in a moſt lamentable condition, they are in more dan-

danger for their ſouls than they are for their outward eſtates, you think it is a ſad thing to be in danger of your outward eſtates that you may loſe all in a night, but if you have not this contented ſpirit within you, you are in more danger of the temptations of the Devil to be plundered that way of any good, and to be led into ſin; Oh when men think thus, they muſt live as brave as they were wont to do, theſe men make themſelves a prey to the Devil; but for ſuch as can ſay, let God do with me what he pleaſes, I am content to ſubmit to his hand in it, the Devil wil ſcarce meddle with ſuch men. It's a notable ſpeech of a Phyloſopher that lives upon mean fare, and as he was eating herbs and roots, ſaith one to him, If you would but pleaſe *Dioniſius* you need not eat herbs and roots: but he anſwered him thus, If you would but be content with ſuch mean fare you need not flatter *Dioniſius*. So temptations wil no more prevail upon a contented man, than a dart that is thrown againſt a braſen wall. That's the fifth particular.

The ſixt Excellency is, *The abundant comforts in a mans life that Contentment wil bring*: Contentment wil make a mans life exceeding ſweet and comfortable, nothing more than the Grace of Contentment; many waies I will ſhew how it brings in Comfort.

1. As firſt, What a man hath *he hath it in a kind of Independent way*, not depending upon any creature for his comfort.

2. *A contented man whoſe eſtate is low, if God raiſes his eſtate he hath the love of God in it*, and then it's abundantly more ſweet than if he had it and his heart not contented; or if he had not the love of God in it: for it may be God grants to a diſcontented man his deſire, but he cannot ſay it is from love; if a man hath quieted his ſpirit firſt, and then God grant him his deſire, he may have more comfort in it, and more aſſurance that he hath the love of God in it.

3. This Contentment is a comfort to a mans ſpirit in this, *That it doth keep in his comforts, & keep out whatſoever may damp his comforts, or put out the light of them*. I may compare this Grace of Contentment to a Marriners Lanthorn, a Mariner when he is at Sea, let him have never ſo much proviſion in his Ship, yet if he be thouſands of leagues from land, or in a rode that he ſhal not

meet

meet with a Ship in three or four months, if he hath never a Lanthorn in his Ship, or nothing whereby he may keep a Candle light in a ſtorm, he will be in a ſad condition, he would give a great deal to have a Lanthorn, or ſomething that may ſerve inſtead of it. When a ſtorm comes in the night, and he cannot have any light come above board, but is puſt out preſently, his condition is very ſad: ſo many men can have the light of comfort when there is no ſtorm, but let there come but any affliction, any ſtorm upon them their light is puſt out preſently, and what ſhall they do now? when the heart is furniſhed with the Grace of Contentment, this Grace is (as it were) the Lanthorn, and it keeps comfort in the ſpirit of a man, light in the midſt of a ſtorm and tempeſt, When you have a Lanthorn in the midſt of a ſtorm you can carry a light every where up and down the ſhip to the top of the Maſt if you will, and yet keep it light; ſo the comfort of a Chriſtian when it is enlivened with the Grace of Contentment, it may be kept light whatever ſtorms or tempeſts come, yet he can keep light in his ſoul. Oh! this helps thy comforts exceeding much.

Seventhly, *There is this excellency in Contentment, that it fetches in the comfort of thoſe things we have not really in poſſeſſion*, & perhaps many that have not outward things, have more comfort than thoſe have that do enjoy them themſelves: As now, a man by diſtilling herbs, though he hath not the herbs themſelves, yet having the water that is diſtill'd out of them, he may enjoy the benefit of the herbs: So though a man hath not the real poſſeſſion of ſuch an outward eſtate, an outward comfort, yet he by the grace of Contentment may fetch it in to himſelf. By the Art of Navigation we can fetch in the riches of the Eaſt and Weſt-Indies to our ſelves; ſo by the Art of Contentment we may fetch in the comfort of any condition to our ſelves, that is, we may have that comfort by Contentment, that we ſhould have if we had the thing it ſelf. There is a notable ſtory you have for this in *Plutarch*, in the life of *Pyrrhus*, one *Sineas* comes to him, and would very fain have had him deſiſt from the wars, and not war with the Romans; ſaith he to him, May it pleaſe your Majeſty, it is reported that the Romans are very good men of War, and if it pleaſe the gods we do overcome them,

what

what benefit shall we have of that victory? *Pyrrhus* answered him, we shall straight then conquer all the rest of *Italy* with ease, saith *Sineus*, indeed it is likely which our Grace speaketh, but when we have won *Italy* will then our wars end? If the gods were pleased *Pyrrhus*, that the victory were atchieved, the way were then broad open for us to attain great conquests, for who would not afterwards go into *Africk*, and so to *Carthage*? But (saith *Sineus*) when we have all in our hands what shall we do in the end? then *Pyrrhus* laughing, told him again, we will then be quiet, and take our ease, and make feasts every day, and be as merry one with another as we can possible; saith *Sineus*, what letteth us now to bs as quiet, and merry together, sith we enjoy that presently without further travel and trouble which we should go seek for abroad, with such shedding of blood, and so manifest danger, cannot you sit downe and be merry now? so a man may think, if I had such a thing, then I would have another. and if I had that, then I would have more, and what if you had got al you desire? then you would be content, why? you may be content now without them: Certainly our Contentment doth not consist in the getting of the thing we desire, but in gods fashioning our spirits to our conditions, there's some men that have not a foot of ground of their own, yet will live better than other men that are heirs to a great deal of Land. I have known it in the Country somtimes, that a man lives upon his own land, and yet lives very poorly, but you shall have another man that shall farm his Land, and yet by his good husbandry, and by his care, shall live better somtimes, than he that hath the Land of his own: So a man by this Art of Contentment may live better without an estate, than another man can of an estate: Oh! it ads exceeding much to the comfort of a Christian: and that I may shew it further, there is more comfort in the Grace of contentment, than there is in any possessions what soever; a man hath more comfort in being content without a thing; than he can have in the thing, that he in a discontented way doth desire.

You think if I had such a thing then I should be content. I say there is more good in Contentment, than there is in the thing that you would fain have to cure your discontent, and

that

that I shall open in divers particulars. As thus.

1. I would fain have such a thing, and then I could be content; but if I had it then it were but the creature that did help to my Contentment; but now it's the Grace of God in my soul that makes me content: and surely it is better to be content with the Grace of God in my soul, than with the enjoying of an outward comfort.

2. If I had such a thing, indeed my estate might be better, but my soul would not be better; but by Contentment my soul is better, that would not be bettered by an estate, or lands, or friends; but Contentment makes my self to be better: and therefore Contentment is a better portion than the thing is that I would fain have to be my portion.

3. If I get Content by having my desire satisfied, that's but self-love; but when I am Contented with the hand of God, and am willing to be at his dispose, that comes from my love to God, in having my desire satisfied there I am contented through self-love, but through the Grace of Contentment I come to be contented out of love to God; and is it not better to be contented from a principle of love to God, than from a principle of self-love?

4. If I am contented because I have that that I have a desire to, perhaps I am contented in that one particular, but that one particular doth not furnish me with Contentment in another thing? perhaps I may grow more dainty and nice, and froward in other things: if you give children what they would have in some things, they grow so much the more coy and dainty, and discontented if they have not other things that they would have; but if I have once overcome my heart, and am contented through the Grace of God in my heart, then this doth not content me only in a particular, but in general, whatsoever befals me. I am discontented, and would fain have such a thing, and afterwards I have it: now doth this prepare me to be contented in other things? No, but when I have gotten this Grace of Contentment I am prepar'd to be contented in all conditions: and thus you see that Contentment doth bring comfort to a mans life, fills a mans life full of comfort in this world: yea, the truth is, it is even Heaven upon Earth, why? what is

Heaven, but the rest and quiet of a mans spirit; what's the special thing that is in Heaven, but rest, and joy, that makes the life of Heaven, there's rest, and joy, and satisfaction in God: so it's here in a contented spirit, there's rest, and joy, and satisfaction in God: In Heaven, there's singing praises to God; a contented heart is alwaies praising and blessing God; thou hast Heaven while thou art upon Earth when thou hast a contented spirit, yea, in some regards it's better than Heaven. How is that you will say? there's some kind of honor that God hath in it, and some excellency that he hath not in Heaven, and that's this,

In Heaven there is no overcoming of temptations, they are not put to any trials by afflictions: there in Heaven they have exercise of Grace, but they have nothing but encouragement to it, and indeed those that are there their grace is perfect, and in that they do excel us; but there is nothing to cross their grace, they have no tryals at all to tempt them to do contrary; but now for a man or woman to be in the midst of afflictions, temptations and troubles, and yet to have grace exercised, and yet to be satisfied in God and Christ, and in the Word and Promises in the mid'st of all they suffer, this may seem to be an honor that God hath from us, that he hath not from the Angels and Saints in Heaven. Is it so much for one that is in Heaven that hath nothing else but good from God, hath nothing to try them, no temptations, is that so much for them to be praising and blessing God, as for the poor soul that is in the midst of tryals and temptations, and afflictions, and troubles? for this soul to go on praising, and blessing, and serving God, (I say) it is an excellency that thou shalt not have in Heaven, and God shall not have this kind of glory from thee in Heaven, and therefore be contented, and prize this Contentment, and be willing to live in this world as long as God shall please, and do not think, Oh that I were delivered from all these afflictions and troubles here in this world! if thou wert, then thou shouldest have more ease to thy self: but here's a way of honoring God, and manifesting the excellency of grace here when thou art in this conflict of temptation that God shall not have from thee in Heaven, and therefore be satisfied and

quiet,

quiet, be contented with thy Contentment: I want such and such things that others have, but blessed be God I have a contented heart that others have not, then I say be content with thy Contentment, for that's a rich portion that the Lord hath granted unto them, if the Lord should give unto thee thousands here in this world, it would not be such a rich portion as this, that he hath given thee a contented spirit: Oh go away and praise the name of God, and say, Lord, it's true, these and these comforts that others have I should be glad if I had them, but thou hast cut me short, but though I want these, yet thou hast given me that that is as good and better, thou hast given me a quiet contented heart, to be willing to be at thy dispose.

SERMON VII.

PHIL. 4. 11.

For I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be Content.

WE proceed now. There are some two or three things more of the excellency of Contentment and then we are to proceed to Application of the point.

The eight Excellency is, *Contentment is a great blessing of God upon the soul.* There is Gods blessing upon those that are content, the blessing of God is upon them, and their estates, and upon all that they have. We read in *Deut.* of the blessing of *Judah* the principal Tribe; this is the blessing of *Judah*, *And he said, hear Lord the voice of* Judah *and bring him unto his people, let his hands be sufficient for him, and be thou an help to him from his enemies.* Let his hand

be sufficient for him, that is, bring in a sufficiency of all the good unto him that he may have of his own, that's the blessing of *Judah*. So when God gives thee a sufficiency of thine own, (as every contented man hath) there is the blessing of God upon thee, the blessing of the principal Tribe of *Judah* is upon thee. It is the Lord that gives us all things to enjoy, we may have the thing, and yet not enjoy it except God come in with his blessing, no whatsoever thou hast thou dost enjoy it: Many men have estates and do not enjoy them, it's the blessing of God that gives us all things to enjoy, it is God that through his blessing, hath fashioned thy heart and made it suitable to thy condition.

The ninth Excellency, *Those that are content they may expect reward from God, that God shall give unto them the good of all those things that they are contented to be without*, & this brings in abundance of good to a contented spirit; There is such and such a mercy that thou thinkest would be very comfortable unto thee if thou hadst it, but canst thou bring thy heart to submit to God in it? thou shalt have the blessing of the mercy one way or other; if thou hast not the thing it self in *re*, thou shalt have it made up one way or other, thou shalt have a Bill of exchange to receive somewhat in lieu of it, there is no comfort that any soul is content to be without, but the Lord will give either the comfort or somewhat instead of it: Thou shalt have a reward to thy soul for what ever good thing thou art content to be without. You know what the Scripture saith of active obedience, and the Lord doth accept (of his servants) their will for the deed, though we do not do a good thing, yet if our hearts be upright, to will to do it, we shall have the blessing though we do not do the things: You that complain of weakness, you cannot do as others do, you cannot do as much service as others do, if your hearts be as upright with God, and would fain do the same service that you see others do; you would account it a great blessing of God upon you, the greatest blessing in the world if you were able to do as others do; now you may comfort your selves with this, having to deal with God in the way of the Covenant of Grace, you shall have from God the reward of all you would do, as a wicked man

shall

ſhall have punishment for all the ſin he would commit, ſo thou ſhalt have the reward for all the good thou wouldeſt do. Now, may not we draw an argument from active obedience to paſſive? There is as good reaſon why thou ſhouldeſt expect that God will reward thee for all that thou art willing to ſuffer, as well as for all that thou art willing to do; now if thou beeſt willing to be without ſuch a comfort and mercy when God ſees it fit, thou ſhalt be no loſer, Certainly God will reward thee either with the comfort, or with that that ſhall be as good to thee as the comfort; therefore conſider, how many things have I that others want? and can I bring my heart into a quiet contented frame to want what others have? I have the bleſſing of all that they have, and I ſhall either poſſeſs ſuch things as others have, or elſe God will make it up one way or other, either here, or hereafter in eternity to me; Oh! what riches are here! with Contentment thou haſt all kind of riches.

Tenthly and laſtly, *By Contentment the ſoul comes to an Excellency next unto God himſelf, yea the neereſt that may be*, for this word that is tranſlated *Content*, it is a word that ſignifies a *Self-ſufficiency* (as I told you in the opening of the words.) A contented man is a ſelf-ſufficient man. What is the great Glory of God, but to be happy and ſelf-ſufficient of himſelf! Indeed he is ſaid to be Al-ſufficient, but that's but a further addition of the word *Al*, rather than of any matter; for to be Sufficient, is Al-ſufficient: Now is this the Glory of God, to be Sufficient, to have Sufficiency in Himſelf, *El-ſhaddai*, to be God, having Sufficiency in himſelf? Now thou comeſt neer to this, thou partakeſt of the Divine Nature, as by Grace in general, ſo in a more peculiar manner by this Grace of *Chriſtian Contentment*, what's the Excellency and Glory of God but this? Suppoſe there were no Creatures in the world, and that all the creatures in the world were annihilated, God would remain the ſame bleſſed God that he is now, he would not be in a worſe condition if all Creatures were gone; neither would a contented heart if God ſhould take away al Creatures from him, a contented heart hath enough in the want of al Creatures, and would not be more miſerable than now he is. Suppoſe that God ſhould continue thee here, and all Creatures that are here in this world were ta-

ken

ken away, yet thou ſtill (having God to be thy portion) wouldeſt be as happy as now thou art, and therefore Contentation hath a great deal of Excellency in it.

Thus we have ſhewed in many particulars the Excellency of this Grace, laboring to preſent the beauty of it before your ſouls that you may be in love with it.

Now my Brethren what remains but the practice of this, for this Art of Contentment it's not a ſpeculative thing, only for contemplation, but it is an art of Divinity, and therefore practical, ye are now to labor to work upon your hearts, that there may be this Grace in you, that you may honor God and honor your profeſſion with this Grace of Contentment, for there is none doth more honor God, and honor their profeſſion than thoſe that have this Grace of Contentment. Now that we may fall upon the practice, there is required,

Firſt, *That we ſhould be humbled in our hearts for the want of this, that we have had ſo little of this Grace in us.* For there is no way to ſet upon any duty with profit, till the heart be humbled for the want of the performance of the duty before; many men when they hear of a duty they ſhoul perform, they will labor to perform it, but firſt thou muſt be humbled for the want of it, therefore that's the thing that I ſhall endeavor in the Application, to get your hearts to be humbled for the want of this Grace; Oh had I had this Grace of Contentment, what a happy life I might have lived? what abundance of honor I might have brought to the Name of God, and how might I have honored my profeſſion? and what a deal of comfort might I have enjoyed but the Lord knows it hath been far otherwiſe, Oh how far have I been from this Grace of Contentment that hath been opened to me? I have had a murmuring, a vexing, and fretting heart within me, every little croſs hath put me out of temper and out of frame, Oh the boiſterouſneſs of my ſpirit, what a deal of evil doth God ſee in my heart, in the vexing and fretting of my heart, and murmuring and repining of my ſpirit? Oh that God would make you to ſee it: Now to the end that you might be humbled for the want of this, I ſhall endeavor in theſe particulars to ſpeak unto it.

Firſt,

First, I shall set before you, *The evil of a murmuring spirit, there is more evil then you are aware of.*

In the second place, *I will shew you some aggravations of this evil*, It's evil in all, but in some more than in others.

Thirdly, *I shal labor to take away the Pleas that any murmuring discontented heart hath for this distemper of his.*

There's these Three things in this Use of humiliation of the soul for the want of this Grace of Contentment.

For the first, now at this time. The great evil that there is in a murmuring discontented heart.

In the first place, *This thy murmuring and discontentedneß it argues much corruption that is in the soul*; as Contentment argues much Grace, and strong Grace, and beautiful Grace? so this argues much Corruption, and strong Corruption, and very vile Corruption in thy heart. As it is in a mans body, If a mans body be of that temper that every scratch of a pin makes his flesh to rankle and to be sore, you will say, surely this mans body is very corrupt, his blood and flesh is corrupt that every scratch of a pin shal make it rankle, so it is in thy spirit; if every little trouble and affliction shal make thee discontented, and make thee murmur, and even cause thy spirit within thee to rankle; or as it is in a wound of a mans body, the evil of a wound it is not so much in the largnes of the wound, and the abundance of blood that comes out of the wound, but in the inflamation that there is in it, or in a fretting and corroding humor that is in the wound; an unskilful man when he comes and sees a large wound in the flesh, looks upon it as a dangerous wound. and when he sees a great deal of blood gush out, he thinks these are the evils of it, but when a Chyrurgion comes and sees a great gash, saith he, this will be heal'd within a few daies, but there's a less wound and there's an inflamation or a fretting humor that is in it, and this will cost time (saith he) to cure, so that he doth not lay Balsom and healing Salves upon it, but his great care is to get out the fretting humor, or inflamation, so that the thing that must heal this wound it is some drink to purge; But (saith the patient) what good will this do my wound? You give me somewhat to drink, and my wound is in my arm, or in my leg, what good will this

do

do that I put in my ſtomach? Yes, it purges out the fretting humor, or takes away the inflamation, and till that be taken away the ſalves can do no good. So it is juſt for all the world in the ſouls of men, it may be there is ſome affliction upon them that I compare to the wound; now they think that the greatneſs of the affliction is that which makes their condition moſt miſerable: Oh no, there is a fretting humor, an inflamation in the heart, a murmuring ſpirit that is within thee and that is the miſery of thy condition, and that muſt be purged out of thee before thou canſt be healed, and let God do with thee what he will, till he purges out that fretting humor thy wound will not be healed; a murmuring heart is a very ſinful heart, ſo that when thou art troubled for ſuch an affliction, thou hadſt need turn thy thoughts rather to be troubled for the murmuring of thy heart, for that's the greateſt trouble, there is an affliction upon thee and that is grievous, but there is a murmuring heart within and that's more grievous. Oh that we could but convince men and women that a murmuring ſpirit is a greater evil than any affliction, let the affliction be what it will be. We ſhall ſhew more afterward that a murmuring ſpirit is the evil of the evil, and the miſery of the miſery.

Secondly, *The evil of murmuring is ſuch, that God when he would ſpeak of wicked men, and deſcribe them, and ſhew the brand of a wicked and ungodly man or woman, he inſtances in this in a more ſpecial manner*: I might name many Scriptures, but that Scripture in *Jude* is a moſt remarkable one, in the 14. verſe, and ſo foreward, there it is ſaid, *That the Lord comes with ten thouſands of his Saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard ſpeeches, which ungodly ſinners have ſpoken againſt him.* Mark here in this 15. verſe, there is four times mentioned ungodly ones; All that are *ungodly* among them, all their *ungodly* deeds which they have *ungodly* committed, and of all their hard ſpeeches, which *ungodly* ſinners have ſpoken againſt him: This is in the general. But now he comes in the particular to ſhew who theſe are, theſe are (ſaith he) Murmurers: that's the very firſt. Would you know who are ungod-

ungodly men, that God when he comes with ten thousand of Angels shall come to punish for all their ungodly deeds that they do, and those that speak ungodly things against them? These ungodly ones are Murmurers, Murmurers in the Scripture are put in the forefront of ungodly ones, it's a most dreadfull Scripture, that the Lord when he speaks of ungodly ones puts murmurers in the very fore front of all, you had need look to your spirits, you may see that this murmuring, which is the vice contrary to this Contentment is not so small a matter as you think, you think you are not so ungodly as others, because you do not swear and drink as others do, but you may be ungodly in murmuring, it's true, there is no sin but some seeds and remainers of it are in those that are godly, but when they are under the power of this sin of murmuring, it doth convince them to be ungodly, as well as if they were under the power of drunkenness, or whoredom, or any other sin, God will look upon you as ungodly for this sin as well as for any sin whatsoever. This one Scripture should make the heart shake at the thought of the sin of murmuring.

Thirdly, As it's made a brand of ungodly men, so you shal find in Scripture *that God counts it rebellion*, that is contrary to the worship that there was in contentedness: that is worshiping of God, crouching to God and falling down before him, even as a dog that would crouch when you hold a staff over him: a murmuring heart it's a rebellious heart, and that you shal find if you compare two Scriptures together, they are both in the Book of *Numb.* 16. 41. *But on the morrow* (saith the text) *all the congregation of the Children of Israel murmured against* Moses *&* *against* Aaron, *saying, Ye have killed the people of the Lord.* They all murmured; now compare this with Chap. 17. and vers. 10. *And the Lord said unto* Moses, *Bring* Aarons *rod again, before the testimony to be kept for a token against the Rebels.* In the 16. Chap. they murmured against *Moses* and *Aaron*, and in the 17. Chap. bring the rod of *Aaron* again, before the testimony, for a token against the *Rebels*. So that to be a Murmurer, and to be a Rebel you see in Scripture phrase is all one, it is a rebellion against God: as it is the beginning of rebellion and sedition in a Kingdom when the people are discontent,

and when discontentment comes it grows to murmuring, and you can go into no house allmost but there is murmuring when men are discontent, so that within a little while it breaks forth into sedition or rebellion. Murmuring it's but as the smoke of the fire, there is first a smoke and smother before the flame breaks forth, and so before open rebellion in a Kingdom there is first a smoke of murmuring, and then it breaks forth into open rebellion; but because it hath rebellion in the seeds of it therefore it is accounted before the Lord to be rebellion. Wilt thou be a Rebel against God; When thou feelest thy heart discontented and murmuring against the dispensations of God towards thee, thou shouldest check thy heart thus, Oh thou wretched heart, what wilt thou be a Rebel aginst God? wilt thou rise in a way of rebellion against the infinite God? yet thus thou hast done, charge thy heart with this sin of rebellion, you that are guilty of this sin of murmuring you are this day by the Lord charged as being guilty of rebellion against him, and God expects that when you go home you should humble your souls before him for this sin, that you should charge your souls for being guilty of rebellion against God, many of you may say, I never thought that I had been a Rebel against God before, I thought that I had many infirmities, but now I see the Scripture speaks of sin in another manner than men do, the Scripture makes men (though but murmurers) to be Rebels against God, Oh this rebellious heart that I have against the Lord that hath manifested it's self in this way of murmuring against the Lord. That's a Third particular in the evil of discontentment.

A fourth particular in the evil of Discontentment, *It is a wickedness that is exceeding contrary to Grace, and especially contrary to the work of God, in bringing of the soul home to himself*; I know no distemper more opposite and contrary to the Work of God in conversion of a sinner, than this is.

Quest. *What's the work of God when he brings a sinner home to himself?*

Answ. The usual way is, for God to make the soul to see and be sensible of the dreadful evil that there is in sin, and the great breach that sin hath made between God and it, for certainly,

tainly Jesus Christ can never be known in his beauty and excellency till the soul know that. I do not speak what secret work of the holy Ghost there may be in the soul, but before the soul can actually apply Jesus Christ to its self, it is impossible but it must come to know the evil of sin, and the excellency of Jesus Christ: there may be a seed of faith put into the soul, but the soul must first know Christ, and know sin, and be made sensible of it. Now how contrary is this sin of murmuring to any such work of God; hath God made me see the dreadful evil of sin, and made my soul to be sensible of the evil of sin as the greatest burden? how can I then be so much troubled for every little affliction? Certainly if I saw what the evil of sin was, that sight would swallow up all other evils, and if I were burdened with the evil of sin, it would swallow up all other burdens; what am I now murmuring against Gods hand (saith such a soul) when as a while ago the Lord made me see my self to be a damned wretch, and apprehend it as a wonder that I am not in Hell?

2. Yea, it's mighty contrary to the sight of the infinite excellency and glory of Jesus Christ, and the things of the Gospel. What am I that soul that the Lord hath discovered such infinite Excellency of Jesus Christ to? and yet shall I think such a little affliction to be so grievous to me, when I have had the sight of such glory in Christ that is more worth than ten thousand worlds? (for so will a true convert say) Oh! the Lord at such a time hath given me that sight of Christ that I would not be without for ten thousand thousand worlds; but hath God given thee that, and wilt thou be discontent for a trifle in comparison of that?

3. A Third work when God brings the soul home to himself it is, *By taking the heart off from the Creature, the disingaging the heart from all Creature-comforts*: That is the Third work ordinarily that the soul may perceive of its self. It's true, Gods Work may be altogether in the seeds in him, but in the several actings of the soul in turning to God it may receive these things in it the disingagement of the heart from the Creature, that's the calling off the soul from the world, *Whom the Lord hath called he hath justified*: that's the calling of the

ſoul but this, the ſoul that was before ſeeking for Contentment in the world, and cleaving to the Creature, now the Lord calls the ſoul out of the world, and ſaith, Oh ſoul, thy happineſs is not here, thy reſt is not here, thy happineſs is elſewhere, and thy heart muſt be looſned from all theſe things that are here below in the world; and this is the work of God in the ſoul to diſingage the heart from the Creature, and how contrary is a murmuring heart to ſuch a thing; a thing that is glued to another you cannot take off, but you muſt rend it; ſo it's a ſign thy heart is glued to the world, that when God would take thee off, thy heart rends, if God by an affliction ſhould come to take any thing in the world from thee, if thou canſt part from it with eaſe without rending, it's a ſign then that thy heart is not glued to the world

4. A Fourth Work of God in the converting of a ſinner, is this, *The caſting of the ſoul upon Jeſus Chriſt for all its good*: I ſee Jeſus Chriſt in the Goſpel the Fountain of all Good, and God out of free Grace tendering him to me for life, and for ſalvation, and now my ſoul caſts its ſelf, rols its ſelf upon the infinite Grace of God in Chriſt for al good; now haſt thou done ſo? hath God converted thee, and drawn thee to his Son to caſt thy ſoul upon him for all thy good, and yet thou diſcontented for the want of ſome little matter in a Creature-comfort? art thou he that hath caſt thy ſoul upon Jeſus Chriſt for all good? as he ſaith in another caſe, Is this thy faith?

5. *The ſoul is ſubdued to God*; and then It comes to receive Jeſus Chriſt as a King, to rule, to order and diſpoſe of him how he pleaſes, and ſo the heart is ſubdued unto God. Now how oppoſite is a murmuring diſcontented heart to a heart ſubdued to Jeſus Chriſt as a King, and receiving him as a Lord to rule and diſpoſe of him as he pleaſes,

6. There is in the work of thy turning to God the giving up of thy ſelf to God in an everlaſting Covenant: as thou takeſt Chriſt the Head of the Covenant to be thine, ſo thou giveſt up thy ſelf to Chriſt; In the work of Converſion, there is the reſignation of the ſoul wholly to God in an everlaſting Covenant to be his; haſt thou ever ſurrendred up thy ſelf to God in an everlaſting Covenant? then certainly this thy fretting, murmuring

muring heart is mighty oppoſite to it, certainly thou forgetteſt this Covenant of thine, and the Reſignation of thy ſelf up to God; It would be a marvailous help to you, to humble your ſouls when you are in a murmuring condition; if you could but obtain ſo much liberty of your own ſpirits as to look back to ſee what the work of God was in Converting you, there is nothing would prevail more than to think of that. I am now in a murmuring diſcontented way, But how did I feel my ſoul working when God did turn my ſoul to himſelf? Oh how oppoſite is this to that work, and how unbeſeeming? Oh what ſhame and confuſion would come upon the ſpirits of men and women, if they could but compare the work of corruption in their murmuring and diſcontent with the work of God that was upon their ſouls in Converſion? Now we ſhould labor to keep the work of God upon our ſouls that was at our Converſion; for Converſion muſt not be only at one inſtant at firſt, men are deceived in this, if they think their Converſion is finiſhed meerly at firſt, thou muſt be in a way of Converſion to God all the daies of thy life: and therefore Chriſt ſaith to his Diſciples, Except ye be converted, and become as little children: *Ye be converted*: Why, were they not converted before? Yes, they were converted, but they were to continue the work of Converſion all the daies of their lives, and what work of God there is at the firſt Converſion, it is to abide afterwards. As thus, Alwaies there muſt abide ſome ſight and ſence of ſin, it may be not in the way which you had, which was rather a preparation than any thing elſe; but the ſight and ſence of ſin it is to continue ſtill, that is, you are ſtil to be ſenſible of the burden of ſin, as it is againſt the Holineſs and Goodneſs and Mercy of God unto thee, and the ſight of the Excellency of Jeſus Chriſt is to continue, and thy Calling out of the Creature, and the Caſting of thy ſoul upon Chriſt as a King, ſtill receive him day by day; and the Subduing of thy heart, and the Surrendring of thy ſelf up to God in a way of Covenant; now if this were but daily continued, there would be no ſpace nor time for Murmuring to work upon thy heart. That's the Fourth Particular.

The Fifth thing in the evil of Diſcontentment, *Murmuring* and

and discontentment is exceedingly below a Christian; Oh! it is too mean and base a distemper for a Christian to give place to it. Now it's below a Christian in many respects.

1. How below the relation of a Christian? The relation in which thou standest. With what relation (you will say?)

First, The relation thou standest in to God: Do'st not thou call God thy Father? and dost not thou stand in relation to him as a child? what, thou murmur! In 2 *Sam.* 13. 4. it's a speech of *Jonadab* to *Amnon*, *Why art thou, being the Kings Son, lean from day to day, wilt thou not tell me?* and so he told him; (but that was for a wicked cause) he perceived that his spirit was troubled, for otherwise he was of a fat and plump temper of body, but because of trouble of spirit he was even pin'd away, why what's the matter? thou that standest in this relation to the King and yet any thing should trouble thy heart, (that's his meaning) is there any thing that should disquiet thy heart, and yet standest in such a relation to the King, the King's Son? So I may say to a Christian, Art thou the Kings Son, the Son, the Daughter of the King of Heaven, and yet so disquieted and troubled, and vext at every little thing that falls out? as if a King's Son should cry out, he is undone for losing a bauble, what an unworthy thing were this? So dost thou, thou crieſt out as if thou were undone, and yet a Kings Son, thou that standest in such relation to God, as unto a Father, thou doest dishonor thy Father in this; as if so be either he had not wisdom, or not power, or not mercy enough to provide for thee.

2. *The relation that thou standest in to Jesus Christ, thou art the Spouse of Christ*: what! one married to Jesus Christ and yet troubled & discontented. Hast thou not enough in him? doth not Christ say to his Spouse as *Elkanah* said to *Hannah*, (1 *Sam.* 1. 8.) *Am not I better to thee than ten sons?* So doth not Christ thy Husband say to thee, Am not I better to thee than thousands of riches and comforts? such comforts as thou murmurest for want of; hath not God given thee his Son? and will he not with him give thee all things? hath the love of God bin to thee to give thee his Son in way of Marriage? why art thou discontented and murmuring? consider thy relation to Jesus Christ,

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as thou art a Spouse and married to him, his Person is thine, and so all the riches of Jesus Christ is thine; as the riches of a husband are the wives, and though there are some husbands so vile as the wives may be forced to sue for maintainance; certainly Jesus Christ will never deny maintainance to his Spouse: it's a dishonor for a Husband to have his Wife go whining up and down; what, thou art match'd with Christ and art his Spouse, and wilt thou murmur now and be discontented in thy spirit? You shall observe among those that are newly matched, when there is discontent between the wife and the husband, their friends will shake their heads and say, they do not meet with that that they did expect, ye see ever since they were married together how the man looks, and the woman looks; they are not so cheerily as they were wont to be, surely (say they) it is like to prove an ill match. But it's not so here, it shall not be so between thee and Christ: Oh Jesus Christ doth not love to see his Spouse to have a lowring countenance: no man loves to see discontentment in the face of his wife, surely Christ doth not love to see discontentment in the face of his Spouse.

3. *Thou standest in relation to Christ* not only as a Spouse, but as *a Member, Thou art bone of his bone, & flesh of his flesh*; and to have a Member of Jesus Christ to be in such a condition, it's exceeding unworthy.

4. *He is thy Elder brother likewise, and so thou art a Co-heir with him.*

5. *The relation that thou standest in to the Spirit of God,* thou art the Temple of the holy Ghost, the holy Ghost is thy Comforter, it is he that is appointed to convey all comfort from the Father and the Son, to the souls of his people. And art thou the Temple of the holy Ghost, and doth he dwell in thee, & yet for all that thou murmur for every little matter?

6. *The relation that thou standest in to the Angels, thou art made one body with them:* for so Christ hath joyned principalities and powers with his Church, they are Ministring Spirits for good to his people, to supply what they need, and thou, and they are joyned together, and Christ is the head of you and Angels.

7. *The relation that you stand in to the Saints, you are of the same body with them,* they & you make up but one mystical body with

with Jesus Christ, and if they be happy you must needs be happy; Oh how beneath a Christian is a murmuring spirit if he considers his relations in which he stands.

Secondly, A Christian should consider, *That murmuring and discontentedness is below the high dignitie that God hath put upon him:* Do but consider the high dignity that God hath put upon thee; the meanest Christian in the world is a Lord of Heaven and Earth; he hath made us Kings unto himself, Kings unto God, not Kings unto men to rule over them, and yet I say every Christian is Lord of Heaven and Earth, yea of life and death. That is, as Christ he is Lord of all, so he hath made those that are his Members to be Lords of all, Al are yours saith the Apostle, even life and death, every thing is yours. It's a very strange expression that death should be theirs, Death is yours, that is, you are as it were Lords over it, you have that that shall make death to be your servant, your slave, even death its self, your greatest enemies are turned to be your slaves. Faith makes a Christian to be as Lord over all, to be lifted up in excellency above all creatures that ever God made, except the Angels, yea and in some respect above them, I say the poorest Christian that lives is raised to an estate above al the Creatures in the world, except Angels, yea, and above them in divers respects too, and yet discontented, that thou who wert as a firebrand of Hell, and might have been scorching and yelling and roaring there to all eternity, yet that God should raise thee to have a higher excellency in thee than there is in all the works of Creation that ever he made, except Angels, and other Christians that are in thy condition, yea and thou art neerer the Divine Nature than the Angels, because thy nature is joyned in an hypostatical union to the Divine Nature, and in that respect thy nature is more honored than the nature of the Angels. And the death of Christ is thine, he died for thee, and not for the Angels, and therefore thou art like to be raised above the Angels in divers respects: yea, thou that art in such an estate as this is, thou that art set apart to the end that God might manifest to all eternity what the infinite power of a Deity is able to raise a creature to; for that's the condition of a Saint, a Believer, his condition is such as he is set apart to the

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end that God might manifeſt to all eternity what his infinite power is able to do to make the creature happy; art thou in ſuch a condition? Oh! how low and beneath this condition is a murmuring and diſcontented heart for want of ſome outward comforts here in this world: How unſeemly is it that thou ſhouldeſt be a ſlave to every croſs, that every affliction ſhal be able to ſay to thy ſoul, Bow down to us: We accounted that a great ſlaverie, when men would ſay to our ſouls, Bow down: As the cruel Prelates were wont to do in impoſing things upon mens conſciences, they did in effect ſay, Let your conſciences, your ſouls bow down to us, that we may tread upon them; that is the greateſt ſlavery in the world, that one man ſhould ſay to another, let your conſciences, your ſouls bow down that we may tread upon them; but wilt thou ſuffer every affliction to ſay, bow down that we may tread upon thee? Truly it's ſo, when thy heart is overcome with murmuring and diſcontent: Know, that thoſe afflictions which have cauſed thee to murmur, have ſaid to thee, Bow down that we may tread upon thee; nay, not afflictions, but the verie Devil doth prevail againſt you in this: Oh! how beneath is this to the happie eſtate that God hath raiſed a Chriſtian unto! What! the ſon of a King ſhal be have every baſe fellow to come and bid him bow down that he may tread upon his neck? thus doeſt thou in every affliction: the affliction, the croſs, and trouble that doth befal thee, ſaith, Bow down that we may come and tread upon thee.

Thirdly, *Murmuring it's below the ſpirit of a Chriſtian.* Below his Spirit, the ſpirit of every Chriſtian ſhould be like the Spirit of his Father; ever father loves to ſee his ſpirit in his child, loues to ſee his Image, not his Image of his bodie only, to ſay, here's a child for al the world like the father, but he hath the ſpirit of his father too: a father that is a man of ſpirit, loves to ſee his ſpirit in his child, rather than the feature of his Bodie; Oh the Lord that is our Father, loves to ſee his ſpirit in us: Great men loves to ſee great Spirits in their children; and the great God loves to ſee a great Spirit in his Children; we are one Spirit with God, and with Chriſt, and one Spirit with the holie Ghoſt, therefore we ſhould have a ſpirit that might manifeſt the Glory of the Father, Son, and holy Goſt in our ſpi-

sits a that's the spirit of a Christian indeed. The spirit of a Christian should be a Lyon-like spirit, as Jesus Christ is the Lyon of the Tribe of *Judah* (so he is cal'd;) so we should manifest somewhat of the Lyon-like Spirit of Jesus Christ; he manifested his Lyon-like Spirit in passing through all afflictions and troubles whatsoever without any murmuring against God: When he came to drink that bitter cup, and even the dregs of it, he prayed to God (indeed) that if it were possible it might pass from him, but presently, Not my will, but thy will be done; As soon as ever he did mention the passing of the cup from him, (though it were the most dreadful cup that ever was drunk since the world began, yet at the mentioning of it) not my will, but thy will be done; here Christ shewed a Lyon-like Spirit, in going through all kind of afflictions whatsoever without any murmuring against God in them: Now a murmuring spirit is a base dejected spirit, cross and contrary to the Spirit of a Christian, and it's very base. I remember that the Heathens account it very base, *Plutarch* doth report of a certain people that did use to manifest their disdain to men that were over much dejected by any affliction, they did condemn them to this punishment, To wear womens cloaths all their daies, or such a space of time at least they should go in womens cloaths in token of shame and disgrace to them, because they had such effeminate spirits, they thought it against a manlike spirit, and therefore seeing they did un-man themselves they should go as women. Now shall they account it an unmanlike spirit, to be over much dejected in affliction: and shall not a Christian account it an unchristianlike spirit to be overmuch dejected by any affliction whatsoever? I remember another compares murmuring spirits, to children when they are weaning, What a deal of stir have you with your children when you wean them? how froward and vexing are they? So when God would wean thee from some outward comforts in this world, Oh how fretting and discontented art thou! Children will not sleep themselves, nor let their mothers sleep when they are waining; and so when God would wean us from the world, and we fret, vex, and murmur, this is a childish spirit,

Fourthly,

Fourthly, *It's below the profession of a Christian.* The profession of a Christian, what's that? A Christians profession is, To be dead to the world, and to be alive to God, tha's his profession, to have his life to be hid with Christ in God, to satisfie himself in God; What, is this thy profession? and yet if thou hast not every thing that thou wouldest have to murmur and be discontent, thou doest in that even denie thy profession.

Fifthly, *It is below that speciul Grace of Faith.* Faith is that that doth overcome the world, it is that that makes all the Promises of God to be ours: Now when thou tookest upon thee the profession of Religion, Did God ever promise thee that thou shouldest live at ease, and quiet, and have no trouble? I remember *Austin* hath such an expression, What is this thy faith? what did I ever promis thee (saith he) that thou shouldest ever flourish in the world? art thou a Christian to that end? and is this thy faith? I never made any such promise to thee when thou tookest upon thee to be a Christian: Oh it's mighty contrary to thy profession, thou hast never a promise for this, that thou shouldest not have such an affliction upon thee: And a Christian should live by his faith; it is said, that the Just do live by faith: now thou shouldest not look after any other life but the life that thou hast by faith; now thou hast no ground for thy faith, to believe that thou shouldest be delivered out of such an affliction; and then, why shouldest thou account it such a great evil to be under such an affliction? Certainly that good that we have in the ground for our faith, it is enough to content our hearts here, and to all eternity: A Christian should be satisfied with that that God hath made to be the object of his faith, the object of his faith is high enough to satisfie his soul, were it capable of a thousand times more than it is: Now if thou maiest have the object of thy faith full, thou hast enough to content thy soul: and know that when thou art discontented for want of such and such comforts, if thou wouldest but think this, God did never promise me that I should have these comforts, and at this time, and in such a way as I would have, but I am discontented because I have not these which God did never yet promise me, and therefore I sin much

against the Gospel, and against the Grace of Faith.

There is yet another thing, It's below the hopes of Christians: Oh! the most glorious things that the Saints hope for.

And against the helps that Christians have. Christians have great helps that may help them against murmuring.

And it is against that which God expects from Christians. God expects other manner of things from them than this.

Yea, and it is below that that God hath from other Christians. These things I shal open at another time.

SERMON VIII. *At* Stepney, *Sept.* 21. 1645.

PHIL. 4. 11.

For I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

Mentioned divers things the last day to set out the evil of discontent; I shal name Two or Three more.

Sixthly, It is below a Christian in this, *Because it's below those helps that a Christian hath more than others have*: they have the Promises to help them that others have not; it's not so much to have a *Nabal* have his heart sink, because he hath no thing but the Creature to uphold him, but it's much for a Christian that hath Promises and Ordinances to uphold his spirit which others have not.

Seventhly, *It's below the expectation that God hath of Christians*, for God expects not only that they should be patient in all things, but that they should rejoyce and triumph in them: how Christians

Christians, when God expects this from you, for you not so much as to have attained to contentednes under afflictions, Oh this is beneath the expectation of God from you.

Eightly, *It is below that that God hath had from other Christians.* Others have not only been contented with little crosses, but they have triumphed under great afflictions, they have suffered the spoiling of their goods with joy, read but the latter part of the 11. of the *Hebrews*, and you shal find what great things God hath had from his people, and therefore not to be content with smaller crosses, this must needs be a great evil.

The Sixth evil that there is in a murmuring spirit, is this, *By murmuring you undo your prayers, for it is exceeding contrary to the prayers that you make to God:* When you come to prayer to God, you acknowledg his Sovereignity over you, you come there to profes your selves to be at Gods dispose, what do you pray for except you acknowledg that you are at his dispose, except you wil stand (as it were) at his dispose never come to petition to him, if you will come to petition him, and yet will be your own carver, you goe cros to your prayers, to come as if you would beg your bread at your Fathers gates every day, and yet you must doe what you list, this is the undoing of the prayers of a Christian. I remember I have read of *Latimer* that speaking concerning *Peter* that he denied his Master (saith he) *Peter* forgot his *pater noster*, for that was *Hallowed be thy Name*, and *thy Kingdom come*: So we may say, when you have murmuring and discontented hearts you forget your prayers, you forget what you have prayed for, for you must make the Lords Prayer to be as a pattern for your prayers though you say not alwayes the same words, what do you pray, *but give us this day our daylie bread*? for that's Christs intention that we should have that as a pattern, and is a directorie (as it were) how to make your prayers; now God doth not teach any of you to pray, Lord give me so much a yeer, or let me have such kind of cloath, and so many dishes at my table, Christ doth not teach you to pray so but he teaches us to pray, *Lord give us our bread*, shewing that you should be content with a little: What have you not bread to eat? I hope there's none of you here but have that.

Obj.

Obj. But I do not know if I should die what should become of my children: Or if I have bread now I know not where I shall have it the next week, or where I shall have provision for the winter.

Answ. Where did Christ teach us to pray, Lord give us provision for so long a time! no, but if we have bread for this day Christ would have us content: Therefore when we murmur because we have not so much variety as others have, we doe (as it were) forget our *Pater-noster*; It's against our prayers, we do not in our lives hold forth that acknowledgment of the Sovereignity of God over us as we seem to acknowledg in our prayers; therefore when at any time you find your hearts murmuring then do but reflect upon your selves and think thus, Is this according to my prayers, wherein I held forth the Sovereign Power and Authority that God hath over me?

The seventh thing that I ad for the evil of discontentment, is, *The woful effects that comes to a discontented heart from murmuring.* I'le name you five; There are five evil effects that comes from a murmuring spirit.

1. *By murmuring and discontent in your hearts, you come to lose a great deal of time*; How many times do men and women when they are discontented let their thoughts run, and are musing and contriving through their present discontentedness; then let their discontented thoughts be working in them, for some hours together, and they spend their time in vain. When you are alone you should spend your time in holy meditation, but you are spending your time in discontented thoughts; you who complain that you cannot meditate, you cannot think on good things, but if you begin to think of them a little, presently your thoughts are off from them, but if you be discontented with any thing, then you can go alone, and muse, and roll things up and down in your thoughts to feed a discontented humor: Oh labor to see this evil effect of murmuring, the losing of your time.

2. *It doth unfit you for duty*: A man or woman that is in a contented frame, you may turn such a one to any thing at any time, he is fit for to go to God at any time; but when one is in a discontented condition, then a man or woman is exceeding

unfit

unfit for the ſervice of God. And it cauſes many diſtractions in duty, it unfits for duty, and when you come to perform duties, Oh the diſtractions that are in your duties, when your ſpirits are diſcontented; when you hear of any ill news from Sea and cannot bear it, or of any ill from a friend, or any loſs or croſs, Oh what diſtractions do they cauſe in the performance of holy duties! When you ſhould be in enjoying communion with God, you are diſtracted in your thoughts about the croſs that hath befallen you, whereas had you but a quiet ſpirit, though there ſhould great croſſes befall you, yet they would never hinder you in the preformance of any duty.

3. *Conſider what wicked riſings of heart, and reſolutions of ſpirit there are many times in a diſcontented fit.* In ſome diſcontented fits the heart riſes againſt God, and againſt others, and ſometimes hath even deſperate reſolutions what to do to help themſelves. If the Lord ſhould have ſuffered you to have done, (ſometimes in a diſcontented fit) what you had thought to do, what wonderful miſery had you brought upon your ſelves! Oh it was a mercy of God that did ſtop you, had not God ſtopt you, but let you go on when you thought to help your ſelves this way and the other way, Oh it had been ill with you, do you but remember thoſe riſings of heart and wicked reſolutions that ſometimes you have had in a diſcontented mood, and learn to be humbled upon that.

4. *Unthankfulneſs, that's an evil and a wicked effect that comes from diſcontent.* Unthankfulneſs the Scripture doth rank among very great ſins. For men and women that are diſcontent though they enjoy many mercies from God, yet they are thankful for none of them, for this is the vile nature of diſcontentment, to leſſen every mercy of God, to make thoſe mercies they have from God to be as nothing to them, becauſe they have not what they would have. Sometimes it's ſo even in ſpiritual things, if they have not all they would have, the comforts that they would have, then what they have is nothing to them, do you think that God will take this well? If you ſhould give a friend, a kinſman, a purſe of money to go and trade withal, and he ſhould come and ſay, What do you give

me?

me? they are but a few counters, they will do me no good: you cannot bear this at his hand if he should do so, because he hath not as much money as he would: So for you to be ready to say, All that God hath given me is nothing worth, will do me no good, they are but counters; though they are the precious Graces of Gods spirit that are more worth than thousands of worlds, yet for you to say, they are nothing, they are but common gifts, and all is but in hypocrisie, all counterfeit, Oh! what an unthankful thing is this! the Graces of Gods Spirit are nothing to a discontented heart that hath not all that it would have; and so for outward blessings, though God hath given you health of body, and strength, and hath given you some competency for your family, some way of lively-hood, yet because you are disappointed in somewhat that you would have, therefore all is nothing unto you; Oh! what unthankfulness is here? God expects that every day you should spend some time in blessing his Name for what mercy he hath granted unto you, there's not any one of you who are in the lowest condition but you have abundance of mercies to bless God for, but discontentedness makes them nothing. It's an excellent speech that I remember *Luther* hath, (saith he) This is the Rhetorick of the Spirit of God, (it's a very fine speech of his) to extenuate evil things, and to amplefie good things; if there falls out a cross, to make the cross to be but little, but if there be a mercy to make the mercy to be great; as thus, If there be a cross, if the Spirit of God prevails in the heart, such a man or woman will wonder that it is no greater, and will bless God that though there be such a cross, yet that it is no more; that's the work of the Spirit of God: and if there be a mercy, wonders at Gods goodness that God granted so great a mercy: The Spirit of God extenuates evils and crosses, and doth magnifie and amplefie all mercies, and makes all mercies seem to be great, and all afflictions seem to be little. But (saith he) the Devil goes quite contrary, the Rhetorick of the Devil is quite otherwise, he doth lessen Gods mercies, and amplefie evil things, as thus, A godly man wonders at his cross that it is no more, a wicked man wonders his cross is so much, Oh (saith he) none was ever so afflicted as I am! If there be a cross, the Devil puts the soul upon

upon musing on it, and making it greater than it is, and so it brings discontent: And then on the other side, if there be a mercy, then it's the Rhetorick of the Devil to lessen the mercy, Indeed (saith he) the thing is a good thing, but what is it? it is no great matter, and for all this I may be miserable. Thus the Rhetorick of Satan doth lessen Gods mercies, and doth encrease afflictions: And for this I'le give you a notable example that we have in Scripture, it is the example of *Korah, Dathan, & Abiram*, In *Numb.* 16. 12. 13. *And* Moses *sent to cal* Dathan, *&* Abiram *the sons of* Eliab: *which said, We will not come up. Is it a small thing that thou hast brought us up out of a Land that floweth with milk & honey, to kil us in the wilderness, except thou make thy self altogether a Prince over us?* Mark, they slighted the Land that they were going into, the Land of *Canaan*, that was the Land that God promised them that should flow with milk and honey: But mark here their discontentedness, because they met with some troubles in the wilderness, Oh it was to slay them, they made their affliction in the wilderness to be greater than it was, Oh it was to kill them, though it were indeed to carry them to the Land of *Canaan*. But now their deliverance from Egypt though it was a great mercy, they made that mercy to be nothing, for say they, You have brought us out of a Land that floweth with milk and honey, what Land was that? It was the Land of Egypt, the Land of their bondage, but they call it a Land that flowed with milk and honey, though it were the Land of their most cruel and unsupportable bondage; whereas they should have blessed God as long as they had liv'd for Gods delivering them out of the Land of Egypt, yet meeting with some cross they make their deliverance from Egypt no mercy, no, it was rather a misery to them. Oh (say they) Egypt was a Land that flowed with milk and honey. Oh what baseness is there in a discontented spirit! a discontented spirit out of envy to Gods Grace will make mercies that are great to be little, yea to be none at all. Would one ever have thought that such a word should have come from the mouth of an Israelite that had been under bondage and cried under it, and yet when they meet with a little cross in their way to say, you have brought us out of the Land that floweth with milk and honey, to say they

were better before than now, and yet before they could not be contented neither; this is the usuall unthankful expression of a discontented heart: And it is so with us now when we meet with any crois in our estates, and taxations and trouble, especially if any among you have been where the enemy hath prevailed, you are ready to say, We had plenty before and we are now brought to a condition of hardship, we were better before when we had the Prelats and others to domineer: and so we indanger our selves to be brought into that bondage again; Oh let us take heed of this, of a discontented heart, there is this woful curled fruit of discontent to make men and women unthankful for all the mercies God hath granted to them, and this is a sore and grievous evil.

And lastly, *There's this evil effect in murmuring, It causes shiftings of spirit*: they that murmur and are discontent, are liable to temptations, to shift for themselves in sinful and ungodly waies, discontent is the ground of shifting courses and unlawful waies. How many of you may have your consciences condemn you of this, that you in the time of your afflictions have sought to shift for your selves by waies that have been sinful against God, and your discontent was the bottom and ground of it? If you would avoid shiftings for your selves by wicked waies, labor to mortifie this sin of discontent, to mortifie it at the root.

The Eight evil that there is in murmuring and discontent is this, *There is a great deal of folly, extream folly in a discontented heart, it's a foolish sin.* I shall open the folly of it in many particulars.

1. *It takes away the present comfort of what you have, because you have not somewhat that you would have.* What a foolish thing is this, that because I have not what I would have, I will not enjoy the comfor of what I have? Do not you account this folly in your children, you give them some victuals and they are not contented, perhaps (they say) it's not enough, they crie for more, and if you do not presently give them more they will throw away that they have, and though you account that folly in your Children, yet you deal thus with God; God gives you many mercies, but you see others have more mercies than

than you and therefore you crie for more; I but God gives you not what you would have, and upon that you throw away what you have, Is not this folly in your hearts? It is unthankfulnels.

2. There's a great deal of folly in discontentment, for *by all your discontent you cannot help your selves*, you cannot get any thing by it. Who can by taking any carking care *add one cubit to his stature, or make one hair that is white, to be black?* You may vex and trouble your selves, but you can get nothing by it. Do you think that the Lord will come in a way of mercy ever a whit the sooner because of the murmuring of your spirits? Oh no, but mercy will be rather deferred the longer for it; though the Lord were before in a way of mercy, yet this discontemper of your hearts were enough to put him out of his course of mercy, and though he had thoughts that you should have the thing before, yet now you shall not have it. If you had a mind to give such a thing to your child, yet if you see him in a discontented fretting way, you will not give it him; and this is the very reason why there are so many mercies denied to you, because of your discontentment, you are discontented for want of them, and therefore you have them not, you do deprive your selves of the enjoiment of your own desires because of the discontentment of your hearts, because you have not your desires, And is not this a foolish thing?

3. There's a great deal of folly in this, *There are many fooliſh carriges commonly that a diſcontented heart is guilty of: They carry themselves foolishly towards God & towards men*, there are such expressions, & such kind of behavior comes from them, as makes their friends to be ashamed of them many times; their carriages are so unseemly, they are a shame to themselves, and their friends.

4. *There is a great deal of folly in diſcontent & murmuring: for it doth eat out the good & ſweetneſs of a mercy before it comes.* If God should give a mercy that we are discontented for the want of, yet the blessing of the mercy is as it were eaten out before we come to have it. Discontent is like a worm that eats the meat out of the Nut, and then when the meat is eaten out of it, then you shall have the shell. If a child should cry for a Nut

that hath the meat eaten out, or all worm-eaten, what good would the child have by having the Nut? so such an outward comfort you would fain have and you are troubled for the want of it, but the very trouble of your spirits is the worm that eats out the blessing of the mercy, and then perhaps God gives it you, but gives it you with a curse mixed with it, that you were better not have it, than have it. That man or woman that is discontented for want of some good thing, if God doth give that good thing to them before they be humbled for their discontent that did proceed from them, such a man or woman can have no comfort of the mercy, but it will be rather an evil than a good to them: And therefore for my part if I should have a friend or brother, or one that were as deer to me as my own soul, that I should see discontented for the want of such a comfort, I should rather pray, Lord keep this thing from them, till thou wilt be pleased to humble their hearts for their discontent, let not them have the mercy till they come to be humbled for their discontent for the want of it, for if they have it before that time they will have it without any blessing: And therefore it should be your care when you find your hearts discontented for want of any thing, to be humbled for it thinking thus with your selves, Lord, if that that I do so immoderately desire should come to me before I be humbled for my discontent for want of it, I am certain I can have no comfort of it, but I shall rather have it as an affliction to me. Many things which you desire as your lives, and think that you should be happy if you had them, yet when they do come you find not such happiness in them, but they prove to be the greatest crosses and afflictions to you that ever you had, and upon this ground, because your hearts were immoderately set upon them before you had them. As it was with *Rachel*, she must have children or else she died, well saith God seeing you *must*, you shall have them, but though she had a child she died according to what she said, *Give me children or else I die.* So in regard of any other outward comforts, people may have the thing, but often-times they have it so as it proves the heaviest cross to them that ever they had in all their lives, such a child as you were discontent for the

want

want of it, it may be it was ſick, and your hearts were out of temper for fear that you ſhould loſe it, and God reſtores it, but he reſtores it ſo as he makes it a croſs to your hearts all the daies of your lives. One obſerves concerning *Manna*, when the people were contented with their allowance that God allowed them, then it was very good, but when they would not be content with Gods allowance, but would gather more than God would have them; then (ſaith the text) there was worms in it: So when we are content with our conditions, and that which God diſpoſes of us to be in, ther's a bleſſing in it, then it's ſweet to us but if we muſt needs have more, and keep it longer than God would have us to have it then there will be worms in it, and no good at all.

5. *There's a great deal of folly in diſcontentedneſs, for it makes our afflictions a great deal worſe than otherwiſe it would be*; it no way removes our affliction, nay, while they do continue they are a great deal the worſe and heavier, for a diſcontented heart is a proud heart, and a proud heart will not pul down his ſails when there comes a tempeſt and ſtorm: If a Mariner when a tempeſt and ſtorm comes ſhould be froward and would not pull down his ſails, but is diſcontented with the ſtorm, Is his condition the better becauſe he is diſcontented and will not pull down his ſails? Will this help him? Juſt ſo it is for all the world with a diſcontented heart, a diſcontented heart is a proud heart, and he out of his pride is troubled with his affliction, and is not contented with Gods diſpoſe, and ſo he will not pull down his ſpirit at all, and make it bow to God in this condition in which God hath brought him; now is his condition the better becauſe he will not pull down his ſpirit? No certainly abundantly worſe, a thouſand to one but the tempeſt and ſtorm over-whelms his ſoul. And thus you ſee what a great deal of folly there is in the ſin of diſcontentment.

The Ninth Evil of murmuring & diſcontentment is this, *There is a mighty deal of danger in the ſin of diſcontentment, for it exceedingly provoketh the wrath of God*; it's a ſin that doth much provoke God againſt his creature, we find moſt ſad expreſſions in Scripture (and examples too) how God hath been provoked a-

gainſt

gainſt many for their diſcontent; in *Numb.* 14. you have a notable text, and one would think that that were enough for ever to make you fear murmuring, in the 26. verſe, it is ſaid, *The Lord ſpake unto* Moſes *and unto* Aaron *ſaying*, what did he ſay? *How long ſhall I bear with this evil Congregation which murmur againſt me?* How long ſhal I bear with them ſaith God, *This evil Congregation*; Oh it's an evil Congregation that murmurs againſt me! And how long ſhal I bear with them? they do murmur and they have murmured: as thoſe that have murmuring ſpirits, & murmuring diſpoſitions, they wil murmur again, & again, *How long ſhal I bear with this evil Congregation that murmur againſt me?* How juſtly may God ſpeak this of many of you that are this morning before the Lord, How long ſhall I bear with this wicked man or woman that doth murmur againſt me, & hath uſually in the courſe of their lives murmured againſt me when any thing falls out otherwiſe than they would have it? And mark what follows after, *I have heard the murmuring of the Children of Iſrael*: You murmur, it may be others hear you not, nay, it may be you ſpeak not at all, or but half-words, yet God hears the language of your murmuring hearts, and thoſe muttering ſpeeches, and thoſe half-words that comes from you. And obſerve further in this verſe, how the Lord repeats this ſin of murmuring, *How long ſhal I bear with this evil Congregation which murmur againſt me?* Secondly, *I have heard their murmuring*; Thirdly, *which they murmur againſt me: Murmur, murmur, murmur*, Three times in one verſe he repeats it; & this is to ſhew his indignation againſt the thing: When you expreſs indignation againſt a thing, you wil repeat it over again, & again; now the Lord becauſe he would expreſs his indignation againſt this ſin, he repeats it over again, & again, & it follows in verſe 28. *Say unto them, as truly as I live ſaith the Lord, As ye have ſpoken in mine ears, ſo wil I do to you.* Mark, God ſwears againſt a murmurer? ſomtimes in your diſcontent you will be ready to ſwear (it may be) do you ſwear in your diſcontent? So doth God ſwear againſt you for your diſcontent. And what was it that God would do unto them? verſe 29, 30. *Doubtleſs your carkaſſes ſhall fall in the wilderneſs, and you ſhall not come into the Land concerning which I ſwear, to make you dwel therein*: as if God

ſhould

ſhould ſay, if I have any life in me, your lives ſhall go for it, as I live it ſhall coſt you your lives. A diſcontented murmuring fit of yours may coſt you your lives. You ſee how it provokes God, there is more evil in it than you are aware of, it may coſt you your lives, and therefore look to your ſelves, and learn to be humbled at the very beginnings of ſuch diſtempers in the heart. So in *Pſal.* 106. 24,25. *Yea, they diſpiſed the pleaſant Land, they beleeved not his word: but murmured in their tents, & hearkned not unto the voice of the Lord; therefore he lifted up his hand againſt them to overthrow them in the wilderneſs.* Here are divers things obſervable in this Scripture.

Firſt, That which we ſpoke to before, How a murmuring heart doth ſlight Gods mercies, ſo it is here, *They diſpiſed the pleaſant Land*: and that a murmuring heart is contrary to faith, *they beleeved not his word, but* (ſaith the text) *they murmured in their tents, & hearkned not to the voice of the Lord.* Many men & women wil hearken to the voice of their own baſe murmuring hearts, that will not hearken to the voice of the Lord; if you would hearken to the voice of the Lord there would not be ſuch murmuring as there is: but mark what follows upon it, you may not think to pleaſe your ſelves in your murmuring diſcontentedneſs, & think that no evil ſhal come of it; *Therefore be lifted up his hand againſt them to overthrow them*: you that are diſcontented, you lift up your hearts againſt God, and you cauſe God to lift up his hand againſt you; perhaps God laies his finger upon you ſoftly in ſome afflictions that are upon you in your families or elſe where, and you cannot bear the hand of God that lies upon you as tenderly as a tender-hearted Nurſe that laies her hand upon the child, you cannot bear the tender hand of God that is upon you in a leſſer affliction; it were juſt with God to lift up his hand againſt you in another manner of affliction; Oh a murmuring ſpirit provokes God exceedingly. There is another place in 16. of *Numb.* Compare the 41. verſ. and the 46. verſ. together, *But on the morrow al the Congregation of the Children of* Iſrael *murmured againſt* Moſes *& againſt* Aaron, *ſaying, Ye have killed the people of the Lord*: and mark in the 46. verſe, *And* Moſes *ſaid unto* Aaron, *Take a Cenſer and put fire therein, from off the Alter, & put on incenſe, and go quickly unto*

the

the Congregation and make an atonement for them, for there is wrath gone out from the Lord, the plague is begun; mark how Gods wrath is kindled; in the 41. verse, the Congregation had murmured; and they murmured but against *Moses* and *Aaron*, (perhaps you murmur more directly against God) and that was against God in murmuring against Gods Ministers, it was against God but not so directly, but it may be the murmuring of your hearts is more directly against Gods dealings with you; if you murmur against those that God makes instruments, (because you have not every thing that you would have) as against the Parliament, or such and such that are publick Instruments, it's against God; it was but against *Moses* and *Aaron* that the Israelites murmured, and they said that *Moses* and *Aaron* had killed the people of the Lord, though it was the hand of God that was upon them for their former wickedness, in murmuring. It is usual for wicked vile hearts to deal thus with God, that when Gods hand is a little upon them for to murmur again and again, and so to bring upon themselves even infinite kind of evils: but now the anger of God was quickly kindled, Oh saith *Moses*, Go, take the Censer quickly for wrath is gone out from Jehovah, the plague is begun: so while you are murmuring in your families, the wrath of God may quickly go out against you, quickly, in a morning or evening, when you act a murmuring, the wrath of God may come quickly out upon your families or persons; you are never so prepared for present wrath as when you are in a murmuring discontented fit, those that stand by and see you in a murmuring discontented fit, have cause to say, Oh let us go and take the Censer, let us go to prayer, for we are afraid that wrath is gone out against this family, against this person: And it were a very good thing for thee that art a godly wife when you see your husband come home and fall to murmuring because things go not according to his desire, to go to prayer, and say, Lord pardon the sin of my husband: and so for the husband to go to God in prayer falling down and beseeching of him that wrath may not come out against his family for the murmuring of his wife. And the truth is, at this day there hath been (at least lately) as much murmuring in *England* as ever was,

and

and even in this very particular the plague is begun, and this very judgment it doth come many times upon murmuring, upon those that are so discontented in their families, and are alwaies grumbling and murmuring at any thing that falls out amiss, (I say) this text of Scripture in *Numbers* doth cleerly hold forth this, That the Lord brings the plague upon men for this sin of murmuring, he doth it in Kingdoms and Families, and upon particular persons. Though we cannot alwaies point out the particular sin that God brings this for, yet this should be examined how far we are guilty of the sin of murmuring; because the Scripture holds forth this so cleerly, that *Moses* when he did but hear that they murmured, Do they murmur? (saith he) Go forth quickly, and seek to pacifie the anger of God, *For wrath is gone out and the plague is begun.* And in 1 *Cor.* 10. 10. there you have a notable example of Gods heavy displeasure against murmuring, *Neither murmur ye as some of them also murmured and were destroyed of the destroyer.* Take heed of murmuring as some of them did, (he speaks of the people of *Israel* in the wilderness) but saith he, what came of it? *They were destroyed of the destroyer.* Now the destroyer is thought to be the fiery Serpents that were sent among them: They murmured, and God sent fiery Serpents to sting them. What do you think that such a cross and affliction doth sting you? Perhaps such an affliction is upon you, and it seems to be grievous for the present, What? do you murmur and repine? God hath greater crosses to bring upon you: Those people that murmur for the want of outward comforts, for want of water, (sometimes) and for the want of bread, they murmur, but the Lord sends fiery Serpents among them. I may say to a murmuring heart, *Wo to thee that strivest with thy Maker*: wo to that man, that woman that strives against their Maker; What doest thou else, but strive against thy Maker? Thy Maker hath the absolute dispose of thee, and wilt thou strive against thy Maker? What doth this murmuring discontented heart of thine do otherwise but wrangle and contend and strive even with God himself? Oh wo to him that strives against his Maker! I may further say to thee, as God speakes to *Job*: *Job* 38. 1, 2. When *Job* was impatient, *Now God spake* (saith the text) *out of the whirlwind,*

and said, Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledg? So doest thou speak against Gods waies, and his providences that hath fallen out concerning thy estate and outward comforts? who is this? *Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledg?* Where's that man or woman whose hearts are so bold and impudent, as dare speak against the administration of Gods providence?

The Tenth Evil of murmuring and discontent in this, *There's a great curse of God upon it, so far as it doth prevail in one that is wicked it hath the curse of God upon it.* In *Psal.* 59. 15. see there what the curse of God is upon wicked and ungodly men, *Let them wander up and down for meat and drudge if they be not satisfied.* That is the imprecation and curse upon wicked and ungodly men, that if they be not satisfied they shall grudge; when thou art not satisfied in thy desires and findest thy heart grudging against God, apply this Scripture, What is the curse of the wicked upon me? This is the curse that is threatned upon wicked and ungodly ones, That they shall grudg if they be not satisfied. And in *Deut.* 28. 27. There it's threatned as a curse of God upon men, that they cannot be content with their present condition, *But they shal say in the morning, would God it were even; & at even, would God it were morning*; and so they lie tossing up and down and cannot be content with any condition that they are in, because of the sore afflictions that be upon them; and therefore it is further threatned as a curse upon them, in the 34. verse, *That they should be mad for the sight of their eyes which they should see:* This is but the extremity of their discontentedness; that is, They shall be so discontented, as they shal be even mad. Many men and women in discontented moods are mad kind of people, and though you may please your selves in such a mad kind of behavior, yet know, that it is a curse of God upon men to be given up to a kind of madness for evils that they suppose are upon them, and that they fear. In the 47. verse, there is a notable expression for to shew the curse of God upon murmuring hearts; the Lord threatning the curses that shall be upon them, (saith he) verse 45, 46, and 47. *The Curse shall pursue thee, and they shall be upon thee for a sign, and for a wonder, and upon thy seed for ever; Because thou servedst not the*

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Lord thy God with joyfulneſs and with gladneſs of heart for the abundance of all things. God here threatens to bring his curſe ſo upon them, as to make them a wonder and a ſign to others, why: *Becauſe they have not ſerved the Lord with joyfulneſs of heart,* (that may be added to that wrath of God upon men) therefore God would bring ſuch a curſe upon them as ſhould make them a wonder to all that were about them. Oh how far art thou then that haſt a murmuring heart, from ſerving the Lord with joyfulneſs?

The Eleventh Evil of diſcontent and murmuring is this, *There is much of the ſpirit of Satan in a murmuring ſpirit.* The Devil is the moſt diſcontented creature that is in the world; He is the proudeſt creature that is, and the diſcontenteſt creature, and the moſt dejected creature. Now therefore ſo much diſcontentment as thou haſt, ſo much of the ſpirit of Satan thou haſt. It was the unclean ſpirit that went up and down and found no reſt; ſo when a man or womans ſpirit hath no reſt, it is a ſign that it hath much of the unclean ſpirit, of the ſpirit of Satan. And thou ſhouldeſt think thus with thy ſelf, Oh Lord what have I the ſpirit of Satan upon me? It is Satan that is the moſt diſcontented ſpirit that is, and Oh! how much of his ſpirit have I upon me that can find no reſt at all?

Twelfthly, Murmuring and diſcontent hath this evil in it, *There is an abſolute neceſſity, that thou ſhould'ſt have diſquiet all the daies of thy life.* As if a man that is in a great croud ſhould complain that other folks touch him. While we are in this world God hath ſo ordered things, that afflictions muſt befal us, and if we will complain, and be diſcontented upon every croſs and affliction, we muſt complain and be diſcontent all the daies of our lives, yea God in juſt judgment will let things fall out on purpoſe to vex thoſe that have vexing ſpirits, and diſcontented hearts, and therefore there is a neceſſity that they ſhould live diſquiet all their daies: and men will not much care to diſquiet thoſe that are continually murmuring, Oh they will have diſquiet all their daies.

Laſtly, There's this dreadful evil in diſcontent & murmuring, *God may juſtly withdraw his care of you, his protection over you, ſeeing God cannot please you in his adminiſtrations.* We

uſe to ſay ſo to diſcontented ſervants; Nay, if you be not pleaſed, mend your ſelves when you will. If you have a ſervant not content with his diet, and wages, and work, you ſay, Mend your ſelves. So may God juſtly ſay to us, we that profeſs our ſelves ſervants to him, to be in his work and yet are diſcontented with this thing or that in Gods family, God might juſtly ſay, Mend your ſelves. VVhat if God ſhould ſay to any of you, If my care over you do not pleaſe you, then take care of your ſelves if my protection over you will not pleaſe you, then protect your ſelves: Now all things that do befal you, befal you through a providence of God, and if you be thoſe that belong to God there is protection of God over you, and a care of God. Now if God ſhould ſay, VVell, you ſhall not have the benefit of my protection any longer, and I will take no further care of you: would not this be a moſt dreadful judgment of God from Heaven upon you? Take heed what you do then in being diſcontent with Gods will towards you, and indeed upon diſcontent this may befall you. And this is the reaſon why many people though Gods protection hath been very gratious over them for a time, and they have thriven abundantly, yet afterwards almoſt all that behold them may ſay, that they live as if God had caſt off his care over them, and as if God did not care what befel them. Now then my brethren, put all theſe together, all that we were ſpeaking of the laſt day, and theſe particulars that have been added now this morning for the ſetting out of a Murmuring and Diſcontented ſpirit; Oh what an ugly face hath this ſin of Murmuring, and Diſcontentedneſs? Oh what cauſe is there that we ſhould lay our hands upon our hearts, and go away and be humbled before the Lord becauſe of this! Whereas your thoughts were wont to be exerciſed about providing for your ſelves, and getting more comforts to your ſelves, let the ſtream of your thoughts now be turned to humble your ſelves for your diſcontentedneſs, Oh that you may have your hearts break before God, for otherwiſe you ſhall fall to it again, Oh the wretchedneſs of mans heart! You will find in Scripture concerning the people of *Iſrael*, how ſtrangely they fell to their murmuring again and again, do but obſerve three texts of Scripture, for that, the

first in the 15. of *Exod.* at the beginning there you shall have *Moses* and the Congregation singing to God and blessing God for his mercy, *Then sang Moses and the Children of Israel this song unto the Lord, and spake saying, I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously, the horse & his rider hath he thrown into the Sea.* And then, *The Lord is my strength & song, & he is become my salvation, he is my God & I wil prepare him an habitation, my Fathers God, & I wil exalt him*; and so he goes on, *And who is like unto thee O Lord amongst the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?* Thus their hearts triumphed in God: but mark before the Chapter is ended in the 23. verse, *When they come to* Marah (in the same Chapter) *they could not drink of the waters of* Marah, *for they were bitter, therefore the name of it was called* Marah, *& the people murmured against Moses.* After so great a mercy as this was, what unthankfulness was there here in their murmuring! Then God gave them water, but in the very next Chapter they fell to their murmuring, (you reade not that they were humbled for their former murmuring, & therfore they murmur again) *Exod.* 16. 1. &c. *All the Congregation of the Children of* Israel *came to the wilderness of* Sin, *&c. And the whol Congregation* (in the second verse) *of the Children of* Israel *murmured against* Moses, *& against* Aaron *in the wilderness, & the Children of* Israel *said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the Land of* Egypt, *when we sate by the flesh-pots, & when we did eat bread to the ful.* Now they want flesh, (they wanted water before, but now they want meat) they fell to murmuring again, they were not humbled for this murmuring against God, neither when God gave them flesh according to their desires, but they fel to murmuring again, they wanted some what else. In the very next Chapter (they went not far) in the 17. of *Exod.* beginning. *And al the Congregation of the Children of* Israel *journied from the wilderness of* Sin *& pitched in* Rephadim, *& there was no water for the people to drink:* then in the second verse, *Wherefore the people did chide with* Moses, *and said, Give us water that we may drink, and* Moses *said unto them, Why chide you with me? wherefore do you tempt the Lord.* And in the third verse, *And the people thirsted there for water, and the people murmured against* Moses *and said, Wherefore*

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is this, that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us, and our Children, and our Cattel with thirst? So one time after another, still as soon as ever they had received the mercy then they were a little quieted, but they were not humbled. I bring these Scriptures for this, to shew, That if we have not been humbled for murmuring, the next cross that we meet withal we will fall to murmuring again.

There are divers Aggravations of this sin of Murmuring, I'le mention but one now, and I shall but begin that. The first Aggravation is this,

To murmur when we enjoy abundance of mercy, the greater & the more abundant the mercy is that we enjoy, the greater, & the viler is the sin of murmuring. As here now when God had newly delivered them out of the house of bondage, for them now to murmur, because they want some few particulars that they desire, Oh to sin against God after a great mercy, this is a great aggravation, and a most abominable thing. Now my brethren, the Lord hath granted us very great mercies, I'le but speak a word of what God hath done of late, what mercies hath the Lord granted to us this Summer, heaped mercies upon us, one mercie upon another. What a condition were we in at the beginning of this Summer? and what a different condition are we in now! Oh what a mercy is it, that the Lord hath not taken advantages against us, that he hath not made those Scriptures (before mentioned) good upon us for all our murmuring, the Lord hath gone on with one mercy after another. We hear of mercy in *Bristol*, and mercy to our brethren in *Scotland*: But still if after this we should have any thing befal us that is but cross to us, that we should be ready to murmur again presently; Oh let us not so requite God for those mercies of his; Oh let us take heed of giving God any ill requital for his mercies; Oh give God praise according to his excellent greatness, to his excellent goodness and grace.

And now, Hath God given to you the Contentment of your hearts? Take you heed of being the cause of any grief to your Brethren, think not that because God hath been gracious unto you, that therefore he hath given you liberty for to bring them into

into bondage, Oh let not there be such an ill effect of Gods mercy to you, as for you to exclude by petitioning or any other way your Brethren that the Lord hath been pleased to make Instruments of your peace, let not that be the fruit of it, not to desire any thing that your selves do not yet understand. God is very jealous of the glory of his mercy, and if there should be an ill use made of the mercy of God after we enjoy it, Oh it would go to the heart of God! nothing is more grievous to the heart of God than the abuse of mercy: As now, if any way that is hard and rigid should be taken towards our Brethren, and those especially that God hath made such special instruments of good to us, that have been so willing to venture their lives, and all for us; now when we have our turns served, let God and his People, and Servants that have been a means to save us shift for themselves as well as they can: Oh! this is a great aggravation of your sin, to sin against the mercies of God: But for this Aggravation, and especially in this particular, we shall speak to (God willing) the next day.

SERMON VII.

PHIL. 4. 11.

For I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be Content.

NOW because it is very hard to work upon a murmuring spirit, there are diverse Aggravations (I told you we are to consider of for the further setting out of the greatness of this sin; I mentioned but only one the last day) now we shall proceed in that.

The first Aggravation of the sin of discontent and murmuring is this, *For men & women to be discontent in the midst*

midst of mercies, in enjoyment of abundance of mercies. To be discontent in any afflicted condition, is sinful and evil, but to be discontent when we are in the midst of Gods mercies, when we are not able to count the mercies of God, yet after to be discontent because we have not all we would have, this is a greater evil. I only mentioned this the last day, that I might shew to you what a great sin it is at such a time as this. The Lord this Summer hath multiplied mercies one upon another, the Lord hath made this Summer to be a continual miracle of mercy; never did a Kingdom enjoy (in so little space of time) such mercies one upon another: Now the publick mercies of God should quiet our hearts and keep us from discontent; and the sin of discontent, for privat afflictions is exceedingly aggravated by the consideration of publick mercies to the Land: When the Lord hath bin so merciful to the Land, wilt thou be fretting and murmuring, because thou hast not in thy family all the comforts that thou would'st have? As it is a great aggravation of a mans evil of him to rejoyce immoderately in his own private comforts when the Church is in affliction, when the publick suffers grievous and hard troubles, if any man shall then rejoyce and give liberty to himself, at that time to satisfie his flesh to the uttermost in all outward comforts, this is a great aggravation of his sin: So on the contrary for any man to be immoderately troubled for any private afflictions when it goes well with the publick, with the Churches, this is a great aggravation of his sin: It may be when the Church of God was lowest, and it went worst in other parts, yet thou didst abate nothing of the comfort of thy flesh, but gavest full liberty to satisfie thy flesh as formerly, know this was thy great sin, so on the other side when we have received such mercies in publick, we should have all our private afflictions swallowed up in the publick mercies, and we should think with our selves, though we be afflicted for our particular, yet (blessed be God) it goes well with the Church, and with the publick? the consideration of that should mightily quiet our hearts in all our private discontents, and if it doth not so, know that our sin is much encreased by the mercies of God that are abroad. Now shall Gods mercies aggravate our sins? This is a sad thing, this is

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to turn the mercies of God to be our misery. Did'ſt not thou pray to God for theſe mercies that God hath ſent of late to the publick, theſe great victories that God hath given, did'ſt not thou pray for them? now thou haſt them, Is not there enough in them to quiet thy heart for ſome private trouble thou meeteſt withal in thy family? Is not there goodneſs enough there to cure thy diſcontentment? Certainly they were not ſuch mercies worthy to be prayed for, except they have ſo much excellency in them as to countervail ſome private afflictions. Publick mercies are the aggravation of private diſcontent, as ſo of publick diſcontent too; if we receive ſo many publick mercies, yet if every thing goes not in the publick according as we deſire, if we be diſcontent at that it will exceedingly aggravate our ſin, God may ſay, What ſhall I beſtow ſuch mercies upon a people, and yet if they have not every thing they would have, they will be diſcontent? Oh! it's exceeding evil. So in particular, the mercies that concerns thy ſelf, thy family, if thou wouldeſt conſider thou haſt a great many more mercies than thou hadſt afflictions, I dare boldly aver it concerning any one in this Congregation (ſuppoſe thy afflictions be what they will) there is never a one of you but that have more mercies than afflictions.

Object. You will ſay, I, *but you do not know what our afflictions are, our afflictions are ſo as you do not conceive of them becauſe you feel them not?*

Anſw. Though I cannot know what your afflictions are, yet I know what your mercies are, and I know they are ſo great, as I am ſure there can be no afflictions in this world ſo great as the mercies you have: If it were but this mercy, That you have this day of grace and ſalvation continued to you, it's a greater mercy than any affliction, ſet any affliction by this mercy and ſee which would weigh heavieſt, this is certainly greater than any affliction; that you have the day of grace and ſalvation, that you are not now in Hell, this is a greater mercy, that you have the ſound of the Goſpel yet in your ears; that you have the uſe of your reaſon; this is a greater mercy than your afflictions; that you have the uſe of your limbs, your ſences, that you have the health of your bodies, health

of body is a greater mercy than poverty is an affliction; there is no man that is rich but if he be wise, if he hath a sickly body, he would part with all his riches that he might have his health; therefore thy mercies are more than thy afflictions. We find in Scripture how the holy Ghost doth aggravate the sin of discontent from the consideration of mercies, you have a notable Scripture for it in the 16. of *Numb.* 8. verse &c. It's a speech of *Moses* to *Korah* and his company when they murmured, *And* Moses *said unto* Korah, *Hear I pray you, ye sons of* Levi, (there's somewhat that you are sons of *Levi*) *Seemeth it but a small thing unto you, that the God of* Israel *hath separated you from the Congregation of* Israel, *to bring you neer to himself, to do the service of the Tabernacle of the Lord, and to stand before the Congregation to minister unto them? Korah* and his company were murmuring but mark how *Moses* aggravates this; Seemeth it a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the Congregation of Israel to bring you neer to himself to do the service of the Tabernacle of the Lord? &c. You see 'tis a great honor that God puts upon a man, a great mercy that he doth bestow upon any man, to separate him from others for himself, to come neer to him, to imploy him in the service of the Tabernacle, to minister to the Congregation in holy things, this is a great mercy, & indeed it's such a mercy as one would think there should be none that God bestows such a mercy upon that should have a murmuring heart for any affliction; It's true, many Ministers of God they meet with hard things that might discourage them, & trouble & grieve their spirits, but now this consideration that God is pleased to imploy them in such a service neer to himself, that though they cannot do good to themselves, yet they may do good to others, this should quiet them And yet in the 10. ver. *And he hath brought thee neer to him, & al thy Brethren, the sons of* Levi *with thee; & seek ye the Priesthood also?* have not you enough already? but still you are discontented with what you have, and must have more, seek ye yet more? *Seek ye the Priesthood also? for which cause both thou & al thy company are gathered together against the Lord: And what is* Aaron *that ye murmur against him?* What, hath God given you such things, and yet will you be murmuring, because you

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cannot have more? Me thinks that this place should keep Ministers from murmuring, though they should meet with never such afflictions and crosses, and unkind dealings from men, yet still they should go on with hearts quieted and comforted in the work that God hath set them about, and labor to countervail all their Afflictions by being more abundant in the work of the Lord. That is the first text of Scripture that shews how the mercies we enjoy are Aggravations to the sin of murmuring.

And then a second Scripture is in the 2. of *Job*, 10. verse, A speech of *Job* to his wife, what saith *Job* when his wife would have had him curse God and die? (that was a degree beyond murmuring) saith he, *Thou speakest as one of the foolish women, shall we receive good at the hand of God, & not evil?* you see *Job* did help himself against all murmuring thoughts against the waies of God with this consideration, That he had received so much good from the Lord; what though we receive evil, yet do not we receive good as well as evil? let us set one against the other, that's the way we should go. In the 17. of *Ecclesiastes* the 14. verse, you have a notable Scripture there whereby you may see what course is to be taken when the heart rises in murmuring, *In the day of Prosperity be joyful, but in the day of Adversity consider* what should they consider? (mark what follows) *God also hath set the one over against the other, to the end that man should find nothing after him.* God also hath set the one over against the other, that's thus, When thou art in prosperity, then indeed every man can be joyful; but what if afflictions befals him what then? then consider: Consider what? That God hath set one over against the other, thou hast a great deal of affliction, and thou hast had a great deal of prosperity, thou hast many troubles, and thou hast had many mercies, make one column of mercies, and one column of afflictions, and write one against the other, and see if God hath not fil'd one column as full at the other; you look altogether upon your afflictions, but look upon your mercies also; for instance, It may be God hath afflicted you in one child, but he hath been merciful to you in another child, set one against the other. God afflicted *David* in *Absolom*, but he was merciful to *David*

in *Solomon*, and therefore when *David* cryed out, Oh *Absolom my Son my Son!* if *David* had thought upon *Solomon*, & cryed, Oh *Solomon* my ſon my ſon, it would have quieted him. And it may be God hath been merciful to thee in a Wife, or in thy Husband, ſet that againſt thy affliction, it may be God croſſes thee in thy Eſtate, but it may be he doth imploy thee in this Service, it may be thou art afflicted in ſome of thy Friends, but thou haſt other Friends that are great mercies to thee, and therefore you ſhould ſet one againſt the other, and it doth concern you ſo to do, for thoſe mercies will be aggravations of your ſins, and you had better make Gods mercies a means to leſſen your ſins, than to be the aggravation of your ſins: If you make not the mercies of God to help you againſt your murmuring, you will make them to be aggravations of the ſin of murmuring. I beſeech you for this take but this one conſideration further, and if you will but work it upon your hearts I hope you may find a great deal of power in it. You find Afflictions, and your hearts are troubled and murmur, conſider how Gods mercies doth aggravate this ſin, thus: In the midſt of our ſins we do make account God ſhould accept of our ſervices, do but conſider thus, If in the midſt of our many ſins we hope that God will accept of our poor ſervices, why then ſhould not we in the mid'ſt of our afflictions bleſs God for his many mercies? Shall God be thus gracious to us that notwithſtanding our many ſins, yet he will not caſt away our poor duties and ſervices that we perform, then why ſhould not we in the midſt of our ſufferings accept of what mercies we have, and not ſlight them and diſregard them? If thou in the midſt of Gods mercies ſhall not be willing to bear afflictions that God laies upon thee, then it were juſt with God that in the midſt of thy ſins he ſhould not regard any of thy duties; now is there not as much power in thy manifold ſins to cauſe God to reject thy duties and ſervices, as there is power in afflictions (in the midſt of many mercies) to take off thy heart from being affected with Gods mercies? And that's the firſt aggravation of the ſin of murmuring, To murmur in the midſt of mercies.

A ſecond Aggravation of the ſin of murmuring is, *When we*

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murmur for small things. Saith *Naaman* servant to him, Father (for so he called him) if the Prophet had required you to do some great thing, would not you have done it? how much more this little thing. So I say, if the Lord had required you to suffer some great matter, would not you have been willing to suffer? How much more this little thing. I remember I have read in *Seneca* a Heathen, he hath this similitude which is a very fine one to set out the great evil of murmuring upon smaller afflictions, (saith he) Suppose a man hath a very fair house to dwell in, and he hath fair Orchyards and Gardens, and set about with brave tall Trees for ornament, if this man now should murmur because the wind blows off a few leaves off his Trees, what a most unreasonable thing were it for him to be weeping and wringing his hands because he loses a few leaves off his Trees, when he hath abundance of all kind of fruit? Thus it is with many (saith he) though they have a great many comforts about them, yet some little matter, the blowing off of a few leaves from them is enough to disquiet them. It was a great evil when *Ahab* having a Kingdom, yet the want of his neighbors Vinyard had such power to disquiet him: So for us to murmur, not because we have not such a thing as we have need of, but because we have not what possibly we might have this is a very great sin. Suppose God gives a child that hath all the limbs and parts compleat, a child that is very comely, and hath excellent parts, wit, and memory, but it may be there is a wart that grows upon the finger of the child, and she murmurs at it, and Oh, what an affliction is this to her! she is so taken up with that as she forgets to give any thanks to God for her child, and all the goodness of God to her in the child is swallowed up in that; would not you say, this were a folly and a very great evil in a woman so to do? Truly our afflictions if we weighed them aright they are but such kind of things in comparison of our mercies. *Rebeckah* she had a mighty desire to have children, but because she found some trouble in her body when she was with child, saith she, *Why am I thus?* As if she should say, I had as good have none, only because she found a little pain and trouble in her body. To be discontent when the affliction is small and little, that encreases very much the

sin of murmuring, it is too much for any one to murmur upon the heaviest cross that can befall one in this world, but upon some small things to be discontent and murmur, that's worse. I have read of one, that when he lay upon a heap of Damask Roses, he complained, there was one of the Rose leaves lay double under him: So we are ready thus for very small things to make complaints and be discontented with our condition. And that's the Second Aggravation.

A Third Aggravation is this, *For men that are of parts & abilities, to whom God hath given wisdom, for them to be discontent & murmur, that's more than if others do it.* Murmuring and discontentedness is too much in the weakest, yet we can bear with it sometimes in Children & Women that are weak; but for those that are Men, Men of understanding, that have wisdom, that God imployes in publick service, that they should be discontent with every thing, this is an exceeding great evil; for men in their families (to whom God hath given parts & wisdom) when things fall out amiss there, to be alwaies murmuring and repining, their sin is greater than for women and children to do it.

A Fourth Aggravation is. *The consideration of the freeness of all Gods Mercies to us.* When ever we have it is of free-cost, what though we have not al we would have, seeing what we have is free? If what we have were earned, then it were somwhat, but when we consider that al is from God, for us to murmur at his dispensations, is very evil. Suppose a man were in a family entertained by a friend, and he did not pay for his board, but he hath it given him for nothing, it's expected such a one should not be ready to find fault for every thing in the house, with servants, or with meat at table, or the like; if such a one that hath plentiful provision, and all given him gratis, and paies nothing for his diet, should be discontented if a Cup should not be filled for him as he would have it, or if he should stay a minute of an hour longer for a thing than he would, this we would account a great evil. So it is with us, we are at Gods Table every day, and it is upon free cost whatever we have. It is accounted very unmannerly for a man at his friends table to find fault with things, though at home he may be bold. Now when we

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are at the table of God (for so all Gods administrations to us are his table) and are at free-cost, now for us to be finding fault, and be discontented, this is a great Aggravation of our sin.

A Fift Aggravation of the sin of murmuring is this, *When men & women murmur, & are discontented, & impatient when they have the things that they were discontented for the want of before they had them.* So it is sometimes with children, they wil cry for such a thing, and when you give it them, then throw it away, they are as much discontented as they were before. So it was with the people of *Israel*, nothing would quiet them, but they must have a King, *Samuel* perswaded them to the contrary, and told them what kind of King they should have; and when they had a King, *Hos.* 10. 3. *What shal a King do to us?* they were not contented when they had one. So *Rachel*, she must have children or else she died, and when she had a little trouble she was discontented too; so that we are neither well full nor fasting (as we use to say.)

The sixt Aggravation of the sin of murmuring is this, *For those men & women to be discontent & murmur that God hath raised from mean and low estates and conditions*; This is a very great aggravation if thou be discontent now: There was a time when thou wert low enough; and perhaps when thou wert so low when thou did'st say, Oh if God would deliver me from such an affliction, or give me but a little more in my estate, I should think my self in a good condition: but if God by his providence doth raise thee, thou art as greedy of more still as thou wert before, and as much discontented as thou wert before: this is an evil thing for people that had mean breeding, and poor beginning for them to be so nice, and dainty that nothing can please them, whereas there was a time not long since that they were low and mean enough; But it is very ordinary for those that are raised from a low and mean condition to be the more nice and dainty, and more proud when they are raised than others that are of better breeding: It's too much for a child to be discontented in his fathers house, but if a man hath taken a poor begger boy, if you had taken such a one into your house that lay begging at your door, and set him at your own table,

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could you bear that such a one should complain that such a thing is not well dreſt, or the like; you could not bear it if your children should do it, but you could bear it a great deal better with them than to hear such a one do it: but thou art a poor beggar, and God hath (as it were) taken thee into his great Family, and if the Lord hath been pleased to raise thee higher, that now thou hast a competency, that thou may'st live as a man, to be of use and service in the place where God hath set thee, now wilt thou be discontent because thou hast not every thing that thou desirest? We know the Prodigal, when he came to himself, Oh! saith he, *In my fathers house is bread enough.* He did not say there's good chear enough, and a great deal of dainties; no, he thought of nothing but bread, *there's bread enough.* So it's ordinary for men and women when they are in a low condition, they think that if they may have bread, any competency, they will be contented and bless God, but when they have their bread and things convenient, they must have more or else they are not contented; know that this is an exceeding great aggravation to thy discontentment, when you are raised from a very low condition and yet you cannot be contented with what you have.

A seventh Aggravation of this sin is this, *For them to be discontent that have been very great sinners and ungodly in their former time.* For men and women that have much guiltiness upon them, the guilt of very many sins upon them, that have provok'd God exceedingly against them, and have brought themselves in a most dreadful manner under the sentence of Gods Justice, and yet God being pleased to reprieve them, for them to murmur and to be discontent with Gods administrations towards them, this is exceeding evil. Oh it were consideration enough to quiet any murmuring in our hearts, to think thus, We are but sinners, why should not we be sufferers that are sinners? But then consider, we that are such great sinners, guilty of such notorious sins, that it is a wonder that we are out of Hell at this present, yet for us to be discontent and murmur, how exceedingly doth this increase our sin! Consider how we have crossed God in our sin, then if God should cross us in the way of our sufferings, should not we sit down quiet without murmuring?

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Certainly thou never kneweſt what it was to be humbled for thy manifold ſins, that art diſcontented at any adminiſtration of God towards thee.

The Eight Aggravation of the ſin of murmuring is, *For thoſe men that are of little uſe in the world, for them to be Diſcontented.* If you have but a beaſt that you make much uſe of, you wil feed it well, but if you have but little uſe of him, then you turn him into the Commons, little proviſion ſerves his turn becauſe you make not uſe of him: If we liv'd ſo as to be exceeding uſeful to God and his Church, we might expect that God would be pleaſed to come in, in ſome encouraging way to us, but when our conſciences tells us, we live and do but little ſervice for God, what if God ſhould turn us upon the Commons, yet we are fed according to our work, according to our imployment; Why ſhould any creature be ſerviceable to thee, who are ſo little ſerviceable to God? This one meditation would much help us, to think, I am diſcontent becauſe ſuch and ſuch Creatures are not ſerviceable to me, but why ſhould I expect that they ſhould be ſerviceable to me, when I am not ſerviceable to God? And that's the Eight Aggravation.

A Ninth Aggravation of the ſin of murmuring is this, *For us to be diſcontent at that time when God is to humble us.* It ſhould be the care of a Chriſtian, to obſerve what are Gods waies towards him, what is God about to do with me at this time? Is God about to raiſe me, to comfort me? let me cloſe with Gods goodneſs, and bleſs his Name, let me joyn with the work of God, when he offers mercie to me, to take the mercie he offers. But again, Is God about to humble me? is God about to break my heart, and to bring my heart down to him? let me joyn with God in this work of his, this is for a Chriſtian to walk with God. It is ſaid that *Enoch*, and *Noah* walked with God; walked with God, what's that? That is, To obſerve what is the work of God that God is now about, and to joyn with God in that work of his; ſo that according as God turns this way or that way, the heart ſhould turn with God, and have ſutable workings unto the workings of God towards him. Now then, I am diſcontented and murmur becauſe I am afflicted; Therefore thou art afflicted

becauſe God would humble thee, and the great deſign that God hath in afflicting of thee, is, To break and humble thy heart; And wilt thou now maintain a ſpirit quite oppoſite to the Work of God? for thee to murmur and be diſcontented, is to reſiſt the Work of God; God is doing thee good, if thou couldeſt ſee it, now if he be pleaſed to ſanctifie thy affliction, to break that hard heart of thine, and humble that proud ſpirit of thine, it would be the greateſt mercy that ever thou hadſt in all thy life; Now wilt thou yet ſtand out againſt God? it's even as if thou ſhouldſt ſay, Well, the Lord is about to break me, and humble me, but he ſhall not; this is the language of thy murmuring and thy diſcontentednes, though thou dareſt not ſay ſo, but though thou ſaieſt not ſo in words, yet it is certainly the language of the temper of thy ſpirit: Oh! conſider what an aggravation this is? I am diſcontented when God is about to work ſuch a work upon me as is exceedingly for my good, but yet I ſtand out againſt him and reſiſt him. That's the Ninth Aggravation.

The tenth Aggravation of the ſin of murmuring and diſcontent is this, *The more palpable and remarkable the hand of God appears to bring about an affliction, the greater is the ſin of murmuring & diſcontent under an affliction.* It's a great evil at any time to murmur & be diſcontent, but though it be a ſin, when I ſee but an ordinary providence working for me, not to ſubmit to that, but when I ſee an extraordinary providence working, that's a greater ſin! that is, When I ſee the Lord in ſome remarkable way working about ſuch an affliction, beyond what any could have thought of, ſhall I reſiſt ſuch a remarkable hand of God? ſhall I ſtand out againſt God when I ſee God expreſs his will in ſuch a remarkable manner that he would have me to be in ſuch a condition? Indeed before we ſee the will of God apparent we may deſire to avoid an affliction, and may uſe means for it, but now, when we ſee God expreſſing his will from Heaven in a manner beyond ordinarie, and more remarkable, then certainly it is fit for us to fal down and ſubmit to him, and not to oppoſe; when God comes with a mighty ſtream againſt us, it's our beſt way to fall down before him and not to reſiſt; for as tis an argument of a mans diſobedience, when there is not only

ly a Command againſt ſin, but when God reveals his Command in a terrible way, the more ſolemn the Command of God is, the greater is the ſin in breaking that Command: ſo the more remarkable the hand of God is in bringing an affliction upon us, the greater is the ſin for us to murmur and be diſcontented. Then God expects that we ſhould fall down when he (as it were) ſpeaks from Heaven to thee by name and ſaith, Well I wil have this ſpirit of thine down, do not you ſee that my hand is ſtretched out, my eyes are upon you; my thoughts are upon you, and I muſt have that proud ſpirit of thine down? Oh then it's fit for the creature to yield and ſubmit unto him. When you ſpeak in an ordinary manner to your ſervants, or children, you expect they ſhould regard what you ſay, but when you make them ſtand ſtill by you and you ſpeak to them in a more ſolemn way, then if they ſhould diſ-regard what you ſay, you are very impatient: So certainly God cannot take it well when ever he doth appear from Heaven in ſuch a remarkable way to bring an affliction, if then we do not ſubmit to him.

The Eleventh Aggravation of the ſin of murmuring is this, *To be diſcontented though God hath been exerciſing of us long under afflictions, yet ſtill to remain diſcontented.* For a man or woman at firſt when an affliction befals them to have a murmuring heart, then it's an evil; but to have a murmuring heart when God hath been a long time exerciſing them with affliction, it's more evil. Though an Heifer at firſt when the yoke is put upon him he wrigles up and down and will not be quiet, but if after many months or yeers it ſhall not draw quietly, the Husbandman would rather feed it fat and prepare it for the Butcher than be troubled any longer with it: So though the Lord was content to paſs by that diſcontented ſpirit of thine at firſt, yet God having a long time kept the yoke upon thee, thou haſt been under his afflicting hand (it may be) divers yeers; and yet thou remain diſcontent ſtill; it were juſt with God that he ſhould bear thy murmuring no longer, and that thy diſcontent under the affliction ſhould be but a preparation to thy deſtruction. So you ſee when a man or woman hath been long exerciſed with afflictions and yet are diſcontent, that's an aggravation of the

ſin: Mark that text in *Heb.* 12. 11. *Now* (ſaith the Scripture) *No chaſtening for the preſent is joyous, but grievous; neverthleſs afterwards it yeeldeth the peaceable fruit of righteouſneſs, unto them which are exerciſed thereby.* It's true, our afflictions are not joyous but grievous; though at firſt when our affliction comes it is very grievous, but yet (ſaith the text) *afterwards it yeeldeth the peaceable fruit of righteouſneſs to thoſe that are exerciſed thereby*; When thou haſt been a long time in the School of afflictions, thou art a very dullard in Chriſts School if thou haſt not learned this Contentment, *I have learned* (ſaith Saint *Paul*) *in every ſtate therewith to be content*: *Paul* had learned this leſſon quickly, thou haſt been a learning many yeers, perhaps thou maiſt ſay as *Heman* did. *That thou art afflicted from thy youth up*, in 88. *Pſal.* Oh it's a very evil thing if being exerciſed long with afflictions you are not yet contented. The eye is as tender a part as any is in a mans bodie, but yet the eye is able to continue in, and bear a great deal of cold, becauſe it is more uſed to it; ſo thoſe that are uſed to afflictions, thoſe that God exerciſes much with afflictions (though they have tender ſpirits otherwiſe) yet they ſhould have learned Contentedneſs by this time. A new Cart may creek and make a noiſe, but after the uſe of it a while it will not do ſo: So when thou wert firſt a Chriſtian, and newly come into the work of Chriſt, perhaps thou makeſt a noiſe and canſt not bear affliction; but art thou an old Chriſtian, and yet wilt thou be a murmuring Chriſtian? Oh that's a ſhame for any that are ancient Profeſſors, that have been a long time in the School of Jeſus Chriſt to have murmuring and diſcontented ſpirits. And thus you have had Eleven Aggravations of this ſin of murmuring and diſcontentment.

But now my brethren becauſe this diſcontented humor, is a very tough humor, and it is very hard to work upon; ther's none that are diſcontented but wil have ſomething to ſay for their diſcontent, I ſhall therefore deſire to take away what every diſcontented heart hath to ſay for himſelf.

The PLEAS of a Discontented Heart.

In the first place, *Saith one that is discontented, It is not discontentment, it is the sence of my condition, I hope you would haue me sensible of my condition: perhaps when God takes away a friend or some other comfort they are inordinatly sorrowful, and wringing their hands as if they were undone, and let any one but speak to them,* (say they) *Would you not have me sensible of my affliction? And thus many would hide their sinful murmuring under Gods hand with this pretence, that it is but sensibleness of their affliction.*

To that I answer, First, There is no sence of any affliction that will hinder the sence of Gods mercies, nay the more wee are sensible of our affliction if it be in a gracious manner, the more sensible we will be of Gods mercie; but thou art so sensible of thy affliction, as it takes away the sence of all thy mercies; Oh this is sinful discontent, this is not to be sensible of thy condition as God would have thee, but it is to be sensible in a wicked way, you go beyond your bounds: By this rule you may come to know when your sorrows and troubles for your afflictions goes beyond the bounds; we may be sorrowful when God afflicts, but Oh! that I might know when my sorrow goes beyond the bounds of it; truly thou maiest know it by this, Doth the sence of thy afflictions take away the sence of thy mercies? If it doth, then it goes beyond the bounds.

Secondly, if it were but a bare sence of an affliction it would not hinder thee in the duties of thy condition, the right sence of our afflictions will never hinder us in the performance of the duties of our condition, but thou are so sensible of thy affliction as thou art made unfit for the performance of the duties of the condition that God hath put thee in, surely it's more than meer sence of thy affliction.

Thirdly, If it were but meer sence of thy affliction, yet then thou couldest in this thy condition bless God for the mercies that others have, but thy discontentedness usually breeds envie at it; when any one is discontented with their condition, they have an envious spirit at the conditions of those that are delivered from what afflictions they bear, certainly then it's

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turn'd to be sowr and naught, when thou art so sensible of thy afflictions, and unsensible of mercies as thou art unfit for the duties of thy condition, and envious at others that are not afflicted as thou art.

The Second PLEA.

But wil a discontented heart say, *I am not so much troubled with my afflictions, but it is for my sin rather than my affliction, and I hope you will give leave that we should be troubled and discontented with our sin; and were it not for sin that I see in my self, I should not be so discontented as I am, Oh! it's sin that is heavy upon me, and it's that that troubles me more than my afflictions.*

Deceive not thy own heart, there is a very great deceit in this, there's many people that when Gods hand is out against them they will say, thy are troubled for their sin, but the truth is, it's the affliction that doth trouble them rather than their sin, their heart doth exceedingly deceive them in this verie thing: For;

First, They were never troubled for their sin before this Affliction came; but you will say, *It's true, I was not before, for my prosperity blinded me, but now God hath opened my eyes by afflictions*: Hath he so?

Secondly, Then thy great care will be rather for the removing of thy sin, than of thy affliction; Art thou more solicitous about the taking away thy sin, than the taking away of thine affliction?

Thirdly, If it be thy sin that troubles thee, If God should take away thy afflictions, yet except thy sin be taken away, and thy heart be better, this would not content thee, thou couldest not be satisfied: but we see it ordinarily, that if God removes their afflictions, there's no more trouble for their sin. Oh! many do be-ly themselves in this, in saying, that they are so troubled for their sin, and especially those that are so troubled that they are in danger to miscarry, and to make away themselves, theres not one in ten thousand that are in such a condition as this is, but it is afflictions rather than sin that puts them to it; indeed you lay all upon this, as if it were the work

work of the Word, or the Spirit of bondage; I remember I heard not long ſince of a Divine that being judicious, and uſed to ſuch kind of things, there came a man to him mightily troubled for his ſin, and he could not tell what to do, he was ready to deſpair; the Divine looks upon him, ſaith he, Are you not in debt? he confeſt that he was; and at length the Miniſter began to find it out, that that was his trouble rather than in his ſin, and ſo was a means to help him that way, that his Creditors ſhould not come upon him, and then the man was pretty quiet, and would not make away himſelf any longer: For it is an uſual thing, that if any thing befals a man that doth croſs him, Oh then it's their ſin that doth trouble them. Sometimes it is thus with ſervants, if their Governors croſs them, then they are vext and fret, and come to deal with them, Oh then they will ſay they are ſorrowful for their ſin: but we muſt take heed of dallying with God that is the Seer and Searcher of the ſecrets of all hearts, many of you go ſullen and dumpiſh up and down your families, and then you ſay it's your ſin that lies upon you, when God knows it's otherwiſe, it's becauſe you cannot have your wils as you would have

Fourthly, If thou beeſt troubled for thy ſin, then it will be thy great care not to ſin in thy trouble, nor by thy trouble to encreaſe thy ſin, but thou art troubled in ſuch a way as the truth is thou doeſt encreaſe thy ſin in thy trouble, and ſince thou ſaieſt thou were troubled for thy ſin, thou haſt commited more ſin than thou didſt before.

And then laſtly, If it be thy ſin that troubles thee, then thou haſt the more need to ſubmit to Gods hand; *and accept of the puniſhment of thine iniquity*, as it is in *Levit.* 26. 41. There's no ſuch conſideration to take away murmuring as to look upon my ſin as the cauſe of my affliction.

The Third PLEA.

O ſaith another, I find my affliction is ſuch that God withdraws himſelf from me in mine Affliction, that is that that troubles me, and can any Body be quiet then, can any Body be ſatisfied with ſuch a condition

dition when the Lord shall withdraw himself? Were my affliction never so great, yet if I find not God withdrawing himself from me I hope I could be content with any Affliction, but I cannot find the presence of God with me in this Affliction, as sometimes I have found & it is that that troubles me, & makes me to be in such a condition as I am.

Now to that I answer thus, First, it is a very evil thing for men and women upon their affliction to conclude that God is departed from them, it may be when it comes to be examined there is no other reason why thou thinkest that God is withdrawn and departed, but because he doth afflict thee, now for thee to make such a conclusion that every time God laies an Affliction upon thee he is departed, this is a sinful distemper of thy heart, and is very dishonorable to God, and grievous to his Spirit. In the 17. of *Exod.* 7. verse, you may see how God was displeased there with such a kind of distemper as this is, *And he called the name of the place* Massah *&* Meribah, *because of the chiding of the children of Israel, & because they tempted the Lord, saying, Is the lord amongst us, or not?* Mark, they did murmur because they were brought into Afflictions, but see what the Text saith, therefore the place was called *Massa* and *Meribah* because they tempted the Lord, saying, *Is the Lord amongst us, or not?* This was to tempt God. Sometimes we are afraid God is departed from us, and it is meerly because we are afflicted. I beseech you observe that Scripture, God calls it a tempting of him, when he afflicts any, for them to conclude and say, that God is departed from them: If a child should cry out of his Father, and say, that his Father is turned to be an enemy to him, because he doth correct him, this would be taken ill. I beseech you consider of this one place, it may be of very great use to you, that you may not be ready to think that God is departed, because you are afflicted.

Secondly, If God be departed, the greatest sign of Gods departing is, because you are so disquiet, you make your disquiet to be the fruit of Gods departing, and if it comes to be examined, your disquiet is the cause of Gods departing from you, if you could but cure your disquiet, if you could but quiet your own hearts and get them into a better frame of contentedness under Gods hand in afflicting of you, then you would find Gods presence

ſence with you, Will you be thus diſquiet till God comes again to you? your diſquiet drives him from you, and you can never expect Gods coming to manifeſt himſelf comfortably to your ſouls, till you have gotten your hearts quiet under your afflictions: and therfore here you ſee how croſſly you reaſon; you reaſon, I am diſquiet becauſe God is gone, when the truth is, God is gone becauſe thou art diſquiet; reaſon but the other way, Oh my diſquiet hath driven God from me, and therefore as ever I would have the preſence of God to come again to me, let my heart be quiet under the hand of God.

Thirdly, Doeſt thou find God departing from thee in thine affliction? Wilt thou therefore depart from God too? Is this thy help? Canſt thou help thy ſelf that way? Becauſe God is gone wilt thou go too? Do I indeed feel God departing from me? It may be it is ſo, it may be God for thy tryal is departed a little from thee, and is it ſo indeed? What unwiſe courſe do I take? I commit further ſin and ſo I go further off from God, what a caſe am I in? God goes from me, and I from God: If the child ſees the mother going from it, it's not for the child to ſay, my mother goes yonder, & I will go the other way, no, but the child goes crying after the mother; and ſo ſhould the ſoul ſay, I ſee the Lord is withdrawing his preſence from me, and now it is beſt for me to make after the Lord with all my might; but I am ſure this murmuring humor is not a making after God, but by this I go further and further off from God, and what a diſtance is there like to be between God and me within a little while? Theſe are ſome of the *Reaſonings* and *Pleas* of a murmuring and diſcontented heart. There are many others that we ſhall meet withal, and endeavor to ſpeak to your hearts in them, that ſo this tough humor of diſcontent may (as it were) be cut with the Word and ſoftened with the Word, that ſo it may paſs away: for that's the way of Phyſitians when they meet with a body that hath any tough humor, then they give that that hath a piercing quality; when there is a tough humor that ſtops the water that it cannot paſs, they give that that hath a piercing quality that may make paſſage for it; and ſo thou haſt need of ſuch things that are piercing to make way through this tough humor that is in the ſpirits of

men and women whereby they come to live very uncomfortably to themselves and others, and very dishonourable unto God.

SERMON X.

PHIL. 4. 11.

For I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

NOW there are many *Pleas* & *Reasonings* yet remain, for there's a great deal of do with a discontented murmuring heart. And I remember I find that the same *Hebrew* word that signifies [*to lodge, to abide*] it signifies to *murmur*, they use one word for both, for murmuring is a distemper that doth lodg in men, where it gets in once it lodgeth, abideth, and continueth, and therefore that we may unlodge it and get it out, we will labor to shew what are the further Reasonings of a discontented heart.

The Fourth PLEA.

Methinks I could be content with Gods hand (saith one) *so far as I see the hand of God in a thing I can be content: but when men deal so unreasonably and unjustly with me I know not how to bear it, I can bear it that I should be in Gods hands, but not in the hands of men; my friends or acquaintance when they deal so unrighteously with me, Oh this goes very hard unto me, that I know not how to bear it from men.*

For the taking away of this reasoning, but, Though they be men that bring this cross upon you, yet they are Gods Instruments, God hath a hand in it, and they can go no further

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than God would have them go. This was that that quieted *David* when *Shimei* curst him, saith he, God hath a hand in it, though *Shimei* be a wicked vile man, yet I look beyond him to God. So, Is there any of your friends that deal injuriously with you, and cross with you? look up to God and see that man but as an instrument in Gods hands.

Secondly, If this be your trouble that men do so wrong you, you are rather to turn your hearts to pity them than to murmur or be discontented; for the truth is, if you be wronged by other men, you have the better of it, *For it is better to bear wrong, than to do wrong a great deal*; If they wrong you, if your heart can submit, you are in a better condition than they, because it's better to suffer, than do wrong. I remember it is said of *Socrates* that being very patient when wrong was done to him, they asked him how he came to be so? Saith he, If I meet with a man in the street that is a diseased man, shal I be vexed and fretted with him because he is diseased? Those that wrong me I look upon them as diseased men, and therefore pity them.

Thirdly, Though you meet with hard dealings from men, yet you meet with nothing but kind, good, and righteous dealings from God: When you meet with unrighteous dealings from them, set one against another. And that's for the Answer to the Fourth *Plea*.

The Fifth PLEA.

Oh but that affliction that comes upon me is an affliction that I never looke for, I never thought to have met with such an affliction, and that's that I know not how to bear, that's that which makes my heart so disquiet, because it was altogether unlookt for, and unexpected.

For Answer to this, First, It is thy weakness and folly that thou didst not look for it and expect it: In *Acts* 20 22, 23. see what Saint *Paul* saith concerning himself, *And now behold, I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shal befall me there save, that the holy Ghost witnesseth in every City, saying, That bonds & afflictions abide me.* It's true saith he, I know not the particular affliction that may befal me, but this I know, that the Spirit of God witnesseth, *That bonds & afflictions*

ons shall abide me every where, I look for nothing else but bonds and afflictions whersoever I go; so a Christian should do, he should look for afflictions whersoever he is, in all conditions he should look to meet with afflictions, and therefore if any affliction should befall him, though indeed he could not fore-see the particular evil, yet he should think, this is no more than I looke for in the general. Therefore no affliction should come unexpectedly to a Christian.

A second Answer I shall give is this, Is it unexpected? then the less provision thou madest for it before it came, the more careful shouldest thou be to sanctifie Gods Name in it now it is come: It is in this case of afflictions as in mercies, many times mercie comes unexpected (and that might be a third Answer) to you, set one against the other, I have many mercies that I never looke for as well as afflictions that I never looke for, why should not one rejoyce me as well as the other disturbs me? As al it is in mercies, when they come unexpected, the less preparation there was in me for receiving mercie, the more need I have to be careful, now to give God the glorie of the mercie, and to sanctifie Gods Name in the enjoyment of the mercie; Oh so it should be with us now, we have had mercies this Summer, that we never expected, & therefore we were not prepared for them, now we should be so much the more careful to give God the glorie of them: so when afflictions come that we did not expect then it seems we laid not in for them beforehand, we had need be the more careful to sanctifie Gods Name in them, we should have spent some pains before to prepare for afflictions, and we did not, then take so much the more pains to sanctifie God in this affliction now. And that's a fift reasoning.

The Sixth PLEA.

Oh! but it is very great, mine affliction it is exceeding great saith one, and however you say, we must be contented, it's true, you may say so that feel not such great afflictions, but if you felt my affliction that I feel you would think it hard to bear & be content.

To that I answer, Let it be as great an affliction as it will, it is not so great as thy sin, *He hath punished thee less than thy sins:*

Secondly

Secondly, It might have been a great deal more, thou mightest have been in Hell: And it is (as I remember) *Bernards* speech saith he, *It is an easier matter to be oppresst than perish.* Thou mightest have been in Hell, and therefore the greatnes of the thing should not make thee murmur, grant it be great.

Thirdly, It may be 'tis the greater because thy heart doth so murmur: for shackles upon a mans legs, if his legs be sore, it wil pain him the more; if the shoulder be sore, the burden is the greater: It is because thy heart is so unsound, that thy affliction is great unto thee. And that's the Sixt Reasoning.

The Seventh PLEA.

But howsoever you may lessen my affliction, yet I am sure it is far greater than the afflictions of others.

First, It may be it is thy discontent that makes it greater, when (indeed) it is not so in its self.

Secondly, If it were greater than others; Is thy eye evil because the eye of God is good? why shouldst thou be discontented the more because God is gracious to others?

Thirdly, Is thy affliction greater than others? Then in this thou hast an opportunity to honor God more than others: So thou shouldst consider, Doth God afflict me more than other men? God gives me an opportunity in this to honor him in this affliction more than other men, to exercise more grace than other men; let me labor to do it then.

Fourthly, If all afflictions were laid upon a heap together: It's a notable expression of *Solon* that wise Heathen (saith he) Suppose all the afflictions that are in the world were laid upon an heap, and every man should come and take a proportion of those afflictions, every one equally, there is scarce any man but, would rather say, Let me have the afflictions that I had before or else he were like to come to a greater share, a greater affliction if so be he should equally share with the whol world: Now for you that are poor (that are not in extremity of poverty) if all the riches in the world were laid together, and you should have an equall share, you would be poorer, but take all afflictions and sorrows whatsoever, if all the sorrows in the world were laid together

together in a heap, and you had but an equal ſhare of them, your portion would be rather more than it is now for the preſent: and therefore do not complain, that it is more than others, ſo as to murmur becauſe of that.

The Eight PLEA.

Another Reaſoning that murmuring hearts have is this; *They think that if the affliction were any other than it is, then they would be more contented.*

Firſt, You muſt know that we are not to chuſe our own rod that God ſhall beat us with.

Secondly, It may be if it were any other than it is, it were not ſo fit for thee as this is, it may be therefore God chuſes it becauſe it is moſt meet for thee, as ſeeing it is moſt ſuitable for the purging out of that humor that is in thee. If a patient comes to take Phyſick, and finds himſelf ſick by it, ſhall he ſay, Oh! if it were any other potion I could bear it, it may be if it were any other than it is it would not fit thy diſeaſe; yea, if it did not work as it doth it would not fit thy diſeaſe: ſo when thou ſaieſt of an affliction, if it were any other than it is thou couldeſt bear it, do but anſwer thy ſelf with this, it may be if it were any other than it is it would not be fit for me, it would not be right to that ſinful humor that there is in my ſoul, and therefore God ſees this to be the fitteſt and the moſt ſuitable for me.

Thirdly, Know that this is the Excellencie of Grace in a Chriſtian, *To be fitted for any condition*; not only to ſay, If it were this or that, but if it be any. As now, a Marriner if he hath skil he would not ſay, if it were any other wind but this, if the wind did blow in any point but this, I could tell how to mannage my Ship, I could ſhew skil in other points, but not in this; would not Marriners laugh at ſuch a one? it would be a ſhame for him to ſay that he hath skil in any other point but this: So it ſhould be a ſhame for a Chriſtian to ſay that he hath skill in any other affliction but this: a Chriſtian ſhould be able to mannage his Ship if the wind blow any way; to guide his ſoul any way.

The fourth and laſt anſwer is this, Know that the Lord hath

rewards

rewards and crowns for all graces, and for the honoring them in all conditions. It may be in such a way as thou thinkest thou couldest honor God, God hath a Crown for that, and God hath another Crown to set upon the heads of those that honor him in such a way as this is, yea, he hath several sorts of Crowns (as I may so say) in Heaven, and those Crowns he must put upon some bodies head, and therfore he exercises thee in varietie of conditions, that so thou mightest have the several rewards and crowns that God hath to reward and crown those that are faithful in several conditions.

The Ninth PLEA.

Oh! but the condition that God hath put me in, makes me to be unserviceable, and this troubles me; it's true, if it were only an affliction & trouble to my self it were not so much, but I am put into such a condition by this affliction as I am unserviceable, & am like to do God no further service, God puts me into a mean estate, & to what good can I do? & how burdensom is my life to me because I can do no service for God! & this is grievous to me.

Indeed if it be true that this is thy great grief, it is a good sign, If thou canst say as in the presence of God, above all afflictions here in this world to be laid aside and not to be imployed in the service of God, I account that the greatest Affliction: I had rather bear any trouble in the world so I might do more service, than to be freed from trouble and to be laid aside and do little service: canst thou say so? It is a good sign of grace for a man to account afflictions to be great because he can do the Lord but little service. Few men account that any affliction at all.

But yet there may be a temptation in this. To murmur at Gods dispose when your calling is low and mean and you can do little service, this is many times a temptation to those that are poor, those that are servants and those that are of weak parts and are fain to work hard to provide bread for their families, 'tis many times a grievous burden to them to think, such men the Lord uses in publick service, and I live in an obscure way, and to what purposes my life?

First,

First, To help against this temptation that thou maiest not murmur against this condition, Do but consider, though thy condition be low and mean, yet thou art in the Bodie, thou art a member of the Body though thou beest but a mean member, the Toe, and the Finger hath its use in the Body, though it be not the Eye, though it be not the Head, or the Heart, yet it hath its use in the body. And it is an excellent expression that I remember *Austin* hath about this, (saith he) it is better to be the meanest member in the body, than to be the highest member and more excellent and cut off from the bodie, it is better to be a little Sprig in the Tree joyned to the Root, than to be an Arm cut off from the Root. Now other men that have but common gifts in the world, that are not Members of Jesus Christ, (indeed) they seem to have more excellencie than those that are godly, that are in a mean condition, mean parts, mean callings, but they are not of the body, they are not joyn'd to the Root, and therefore their condition is worse. As a great Arm of a Tree when it is cut off it hath a great many leaves upon it, and it seems a great deal more glorious than those little Sprigs that are upon the Tree, but that little Sprig is in a better condition, why? because joyned to the Tree and hath sap from the Root and flourisheth, but the other wil wither and die within a while: So it is with the men of the world, they be but like great Boughs cut off from the Tree, though they have excellent parts, and have great estates and pomp and glorie in the world, they have no union with Jesus Christ the Root: But now others that live in a poor condition, a poor Tradesman, a poor servant, a poor laboring man that labors for his familie everie day, yet he being godly, (saith he) though I have but little for the present, little glorie, little credit, little comfort, yet I am joyned to the bodie, and there I haue supply and that that wil feed me with comfort, blessing, and mercie to all eternitie: So all that are in a poor condition in this world if they be godlie, do but think of that; though thou beest mean, yet thou art in the bodie and joyned to the Root, thou art joyned to the principal of Comfort, Good, blessing, and Mercy that will hold out to eternitie, when thousand thousands of glorious pompous men in the world shall wither and perish

perish everlastingly, and therefore be not troubled at thy mean condition.

Secondly; Though thou hast but a mean calling in this world, and so art not regarded as a man of use in the world, yet if thou beest a Christian, God hath called thee to a higher calling; thy general calling it is a high calling, though thy particular calling be but low and mean: And for that you have a place in the Chapter before my text, *Phil.* 14. *Press towards the mark* (saith the Apostle) *for the prize of the High Calling of God in Christ Jesus*. So that every Christian hath an high Calling of God in Christ Jesus, God hath called him to the highest thing that he hath called any creature to that he hath made, the Angels in Heaven have not a higher calling than thou hast. Thou that perhaps spendest thy time in a poor business, in the meanest calling, if thou beest a dung-taker, to rake channels or cleanse places of filth or any other thing in the world that is the meanest that can be conceived of, thy general calling as a Christian doth advance thee higher than any particular calling can advance any man in the world; others indeed that are call'd to manage the Affairs of the State, they are in a high Calling, or Ministers they are in a high Calling, but thine in some respect is higher. A poor servant that must be scraping all day about poor, meanest things, many times may have such a temptation as this is, Oh what a poor condition hath God disposed me to! will God have regard to such a one that is in such a poor low place as I am? Oh yes Christ hath regard to the meanest member, as a man hath as true regard to the Toe if it be in pain, and will tender that as truly and verily as any other member; so Christ hath regard to his lowest and meanest ones.

Thirdly, Thou art in a high calling, though thy outward calling be low in respect of men, yet in respect of God thou art in the same calling with the Angels in Heaven, and in some degree call'd to that that is higher, for the Scripture saith that the Angels come to understand the Mysteries of the Gospel by the Church, thou that are a Christian in that general Calling of things, dost not joyned with Principalities and Powers, and with Angels, in the greatest work that God hath called any

creature to, and therfore let that comfort thee in this.

Fourthly, Thy calling is Low and mean, yet be not discontented with that, for thou hast a principle within thee (if thou beest a godly man or woman) of Grace that doth raise thy lowest actions to be higher in Gods esteem, than all the brave glorious actions that are done in the world; the principle of Faith doth it, for any man or woman to go on in obedience to God in a way of Faith in the calling that God hath set them, (I say doing this through a principle of Faith) it doth raise this action, and make it a more glorious action than al the glorious Victories of *Alexander* and *Cæsar*, than al their Triumphs and glorious pomp that they had in al their conquests, it was not so glorious as for thee to do the lowest action out of Faith. or, as *Luther* speaks of a poor Milk-maid, and yet being a beleever, and doth it in Faith, he compares the action to al the glorious actions of *Cæsar*, and makes that a great deal more eminent and glorious in the eyes of God, therefore Faith raises thy works that are but mean, raises them to be very glorious.

Yea, and the truth is, There is more obedience to submit to God in a low calling, than to submit to him in a higher calling; for it's cleer obedience, meer obedience that makes thee go on in a low calling; but there may be much self love that makes men go on in a higher calling, for ther's Riches, Credit, and account in the world, and rewards comes in by that, which doth not in the other; to go on quietly in a low calling is more obedience to God.

Fifthly, Know further in the last place, There is like to be more reward: For the Lord when he comes to reward he doth not come to examine what the work hath been that men and women have been exercised in, but what their faithfulness hath been, *Well done good and faithful servant*, saith the Lord, he doth not say, wel done good servant for thou hast been faithful to me in publick works, ruling Cities and States, and Affairs in Kingdoms, and therefore thou shals be rewarded, no, but *Well done good and faithful servant*; now thou maist be faithful in little as wel as others are in more, by going on & working thy daies labor, when thou geteſt but a couple of shillings

lings to maintain thy family, thou maiest be as faithful in this as those are that rules a Kingdom; how God looks to a mans faithfulnes, and thou maist have as great a reward for thy faithfulnes that art a poor Servant in the Kitchin al the day, as another that sits upon the Throne al day, and as great a Crown of glorie thou maiest have at the day of Judgment, as a King that sits upon the Throne, that hath ruled for God upon his Throne; yea, thy faithfulnes may be rewarded by God with as great glory, as a King that hath swaied his Scepter for God; because (I say) the Lord doth not so much look at the work that is done, as at the faithfulnes of our hearts in doing it; then why should not every one of us go on comfortably and cheerfully in our low condition, for why may not I be faithful as well as another? It's true, I cannot come to be as rich a man, and as honorable as others, but I may be as faithful as any other man, that every one of you may conclude with your selves. What doth let but that you that are the poorest and meanest may be as faithful as the greatest, yea you may have as glorious a Crown in Heaven, and therefore go on comfortably and cheerfully in your way.

The Tenth PLEA.

There's another reasoning that some may have, and that is this. *Oh! I could bear much affliction in some other way, but this is very grievous to me; the unsettledness of my condition, though my condition were but low, yet if it were in a settled way I could be content, but it is so unconstant, and so unsetled, that I can never know what to trust to, but am tost up and down in the world in an unsetled condition, and this is hard to be content with.*

Now to that I answer, First, that the Psalmist saith, That *every man in his setled estate is vanity*, in Psalm. 36. 5. your books have it, Every man at his *best estate* is vanity, the world is his *setled estate*; you think if you were but setled, Oh then you could be content, but the truth is, man in his setled estate is vanity.

Secondly, I answer thus, That perhaps God sees it is better for thee to live in a continual dependance upon him, and not to

know what thy condition shal be on the morrow, then for thee to have a more setled condition in respect of the comforts of the creature; do but remember that we spake of before, that Christ doth not teach you to pray, Lord give me enough that wil serve me for two or three yeers, but, *this day our dayly bread*; to teach us we must live upon God in a dependent condition every day for dailie bread. Here was the difference that is observable between the Land of *Canaan* and *Egypt*, the Land of *Canaan* that depended upon God for the watering of it with showers from Heaven, but *Egypt* had a constant way of watring the Countrie, that did not so much depend upon Heaven for water, but upon the River *Nylus*, which did at some certain time overflow the Countrie: and they knowing that the watering of their countrie did depend upon that river, and not upon Heaven they grow more proud: and therefore the Scripture to expres *Pharoahs* pride, brings him in saying, *The river is mine*, he could order the River as he pleased, for it was his: *Canaan*, which was a Countrie which was to depend upon God, though they had rain at one time, yet they knew not whether they should have it at another time, and liv'd alwaies in a dependance upon God not knowing what should become of them; Now God thought this to be a better Land for his people than *Egypt*, and this is given as one reason among others for it, because the Lord look't upon this, as more futable to the state of his people that were to live by faith, to be continually depending upon Heaven, upon Himself, and not to have a constant setled way in the creature for their outward dependence. And we find it by experience that when those that are godlie live in the greatest dependence upon God, and have no setled comings in from the creature, they do exercise Faith more, and are in a better condition for their soules than before. Oh! many times it falls out that the worse thy outward estate is, the better thy soul is, and the better thy outward estate is the worse thy soul is. We read in *Ezra*, 4.13. the objection that the enemies had against the people of *Israels* building of the walls of the City, their writing to *Artaxerxes* against them, saith, *Be it known unto the King, that if the City be builded, and the walls set up again, then they will not pay toll, tribute, & custom; and so thou shalt endamage the revenue of the*

Kings

Kings. If the wal be built (say they) then they wil refuse to pay toll, tribute, and custom to the King: that is thus, so long as they live in such a condition, where they have dependance wholly upon the King, and lie at the Kings mercie, that is, they are in no Citie that hath walls built, but the King may come upon them when he wil, so long they wil pay custom to the King, but if once they come to build a wal, and can defend themselves, and have not their dependance upon the King as before, then they wil denie paying toll, tribute and custom. So it is thus for al the world between God and mens soals, when a soul lives in a way of meer dependance upon God, that sensibly he sees God hath him at advantage every moment, Oh then such a soul wil pay toll and custom, that soul exercises faith, and begs every day his dailie bread; but if God hedges that man about with an estate, with prosperity, perhaps he hath an inheritance befalles him, perhaps he hath a constant Office that brings in so much yeerly to him dulie paid, this man is not so sensible now of his dependance upon God, he begins now to pay less toll and custom to God than before; God hath less service from this man now than before. God sees it better for his people to live in a depending condition: we are very loth in respect of God to be dependant, we would be al Independants this way, we would be of our selves, and have no dependance upon the Lord, but God sees it better for us to live in a depending condition.

Further, This may be thy comfort, though for outward things thou art mightily unsetled, yet for the great things of thy soul and eternal estate, there thou art setled, there thou hast a setled way, a constant way of fetching supply, *Of his fulnesse we receive grace for grace*, thou hast there abundance of treasure to go to, and fetch al that thou standest in need of and observe it that now thy condition is more setled in the Covenant of grace than it was in the Covenant of works: in the Covenant of works there God gave man a stock to trade with, but he put it in his own hand, so that he might trade and get or lose; but now in the Covenant of Grace God makes sure, the stock is kept in the hand of Christ, and we must go to him for supply continually, for Christ keeps the stock; perhaps we

we may trifle away somwhat in our trading, but God takes that care still we shal never spend the stock; As a man when his son breaks, having squandred away his stock that he gave him before, afterwards he puts his stock into a friends hand, and saith he, you shal keep the stock and it shal not be at his dispose; so we are in a more settled condition in respect of our eternal estate than *Adam* was in innocencie; therefore let that comfort us in al our unsetled conditions in the matters of the world.

The Eleventh Q. I. B. A.

But yet there's another reasoning that many murmuring hearts think to feed their humor withal, (say they) *If I never had bin in a better condition, then I could bear this affliction, if God had alwaies kept me in so low a condition I could be content, Oh but there was a time that I prospered more, and I had things at more full hand, and therfore now it is harder to me to be brought low; or in the these times perhaps a man that had five or six hundreds yeer, but now hath had nothing for a great while, if that man had not bin born to so much, or never had prospered in any higher degree than now he is in, this affliction had bin less, perhaps he hath some mony and friends to live upon but if he had never been in a better condition he would not have accounted it so great a matter to have been without it now. This many times is our greatest wound that once were in a better condition, and this is the most unreasonable thing for us to murmur upon this ground of any.*

For first, Is thy eye evil, because God hath been good to thee heretofore? It's an ill thing for us to have our eye evil because God is good to others, but to look upon our condition with an evil eye now, because God was once good to us; hath God done thee any wrong because he was formerly more good to thee than he was to others?

Secondly, Thou didst heretofore more prosper? Did God heretofore give thee more prosperity? it was to prepare thee for afflictions; we should look at all our outward prosperity as a preparation to affliction, if thou hadst done so then it would not have been so difficult for thee to have endured affliction now when thou hadst a great estate yet if thou hadst made use of that mercie of God to prepare thee for thy afflicted estate, then

the change of thy estate would not be so grievous. That every Christian should do: Have I an Estate now? I should prepare for poverty. Have I health now? I should prepare for sickness. Have I liberty? let me prepare my self for imprisonment: What know I what God may call me to? Have I comfort and peace now in my conscience? that God shine upon me? while I have this let me prepare for Gods withdrawing from me. Am I delivered from temptations? let me prepare now for the time of temptations; If thou wouldest do so, the change of thy condition would not be so grevious to thee. Marriners that are in a calm wil prepare for storms, would they say, If we never had calms, we would fear storms? but now we have had calms so many yeers or weeks together, this is grievous: In thy calm thou art to prepare for storms, and the storm would be less, thou shouldest reason quite contrary and say, Now I am in an afflicted condition, Oh but blessed be God, *I was in a comfortable condition*, and blessed be God that he was a forehand with me in the waies of his mercie, this one consideration may help murmuring hearts. Dost thou murmur because once thou were better? know God was beforehand with thee in the waies of mercie, thou shouldest rather think thus, I have lived for these many yeers (forty yeers perhaps or more) in a comfortable condition, I have liv'd in health, and peace, and plenty, what though the remaining part of my time hath soul sorrow and affliction? The Lord hath granted to me a comfortable sunshine al the day long till towards evening, and what if at seven or eight a clock at night it begins to rain? let me thank God I have had so fair wether al day. You that are going a voyage, if you have a comfortable wind, and very fair for many months together, what if you have a little storm when you are within sight of land, will you murmur and repine? Oh no, but rather bless God that you have had such a comfortable voyage so long: Oh this consideration would help us al: If it were so that now God should say, Well, you shal never see comfortable day more for outward things in this world, Oh then you have cause to fall down and bless Gods Name that you have had so many comfortable dayes: now you reason quite contrary, whereas you should bless God that you have had.

had so much comfort, you make what you have had before to be an aggravation to your affliction now, and so murmur and are discontented. That which God gave you before, upon what terms did you hold it? did you hold it so as you have in your writings, *To have and to hold for ever*? God gives no such thing, God gives to no man (I say) any thing but grace to run upon that tenour, there's no such thing in all God's writings for any outward comforts, *To have and to hold for you and your heirs*, indeed for grace he doth give it to your selves, *to have and to hold for ever*, though not for every one that comes out of your loins to have and to hold for ever; God doth not give any outward thing so upon any such tenour as that is; if God gives me an understanding of himself, and faith, and humility, and love, and patience, and such graces of his Spirit he gives them me for ever, If he gives Himself, and his Christ, and his Promise, and his Covenant, he gives me them for ever, what am I therefore that the Sun should alwaies shine upon me, that I must have fair weather all my daies? that which God gives to me, he gave it to me as a pledg of his love, let me return it to him as a pledg of my obedience, there's all the reason in the world for it, all that a godly man receives from God he receives it as a pledg of Gods love to him, therefore when he comes into an afflicted condition, saith God, Return to me as a pledg for your obedience that you had from me as a pledg of my love; we should cheerfully come in to God and bless God that we have any thing to render unto him as a pledg of our obedience, and say, Oh it is thy love O Lord that hath given us any thing, that doth enable us to render a pledg of our obedience to thee. When God calls for thy estate or any comforts that thou hast, God calls for it as a pledg of thy obedience to him.

The Twelfth FLEA.

Another reasoning of a murmuring heart is this, *Oh but after I have taken a great deal of pains for such a comfort, or that I am grown rich after a great deal of labor and pains that I have taken now to be croft. Oh this comfort is*

is alive. The more you set the more you have and fill-
nation. Secondly,

Secondly, When thou didst take a great deal of pains, was it not with submission to God? Didst thou take pains with resolution, that thou must have such a thing when thou laboreſt for it? Then know that thou laboreſt not as a Christian, but if thou did'ſt labor and take pains, was it not with reſignation to God? Lord, I am taking pains in the way of my calling, but with ſubmiſſion, I depend wholly upon thee for ſucceſs and a bleſſing; And what was it that thou didſt aim at in thy labor? was it not that thou mighteſt walk with God in the place that God had ſet thee? A Chriſtian ſhould do ſo in his outward calling, I am diligent in my outward calling, but it is, that I might obey God in it; it's true, I do it that I might provide for my family, but the chief thing that I aim at is, That I might yield obedience to God in the way that God hath ſet me: Now if God calls thee to another condition to obey him in, though it be by ſuffering, thou wilt do it if thy heart be right.

Thirdly, There will be the more Teſtimony of thy love to God, if ſo be thou ſhalt now yield up thy ſelf to God in that that coſt thee deer. Shal I offer that to God (ſaith *David*) that coſt me nothing? thy outward comforts hath coſt thee much, and thou haſt taken much pains to obtain them, and now if thou canſt ſubmit to God in the want of them: (I ſay) in this thy love is more ſhown that thou canſt offer that to God that coſt thee deer. Now theſe are the principal reaſonings of a diſcontented heart.

The Thirteenth PLEA.

There's one Plea more that may be nam'd, and that is this, ſay ſome, *Though I confeſs my affliction is ſomewhat hard, and I feel ſome trouble within me, yet I thank God I break not out in diſcontented waies to the diſhonor of God, I keep in although I have much ado with my own heart.*

Oh! do not ſatisfie your ſelves with that, for the diſtempers of your hearts, and their ſinful workings are as words before God, *My ſoul be ſilent to God*; That we ſpake of in the beginning

of the opening of this Scripture, it is not enough for thy tongue to be silent; but thy soul must be silent, there may be a sullen discontentedness of heart as wel as discontentedness manifested in words; and if thou doest but mortifie that inward sullenness, if thou beest afflicted a little more it wil break forth at last.

And thus the Lord I hope hath met with the chief *Reasonings* and *Pleas* for our discontent in our conditions. I beseech you in the Name of God consider these things, and because they do concern your own hearts, you may so much the better remember them, I had thought to have made a little Entrance into the next Head, and that is some way of helping you to this Grace of Contentment. It is a most excellent Grace, of admirable use as you have heard; and the contrary is very sinful and vile.

SERMON XI.

PHIL. 4. 11.

For I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

NOW we are coming to the close of this point of *Contentment* that Jesus Christ doth teach those that are in his School: we have opened the point unto you, and shewed you wherein the Art, and Skill, and Misterie of Christian Contentment lies: and divers things in the way of application rebuking the want of this; and the last day I finished that point of shewing the several Reasonings of a murmuring and discontented heart. I shal now (as being desirous to make an end) leave what was said, and proceed to what remains. There are only these two things for the

the working of your hearts to this Grace of Christian Contentment.

First, The propounding of several CONSIDERATIONS, for the contenting of the heart in any afflicted condition.

Secondly, The propounding of DIRECTIONS, what should be done for the workings of our hearts unto this.

The First CONSIDERATION.

We should consider (in all our wants and inclinations to discontent) *The greatness of the mercies that we have, and the meaness of the things that we want.* The things we want, (if we be godly) they are things of very small moment in comparison to the things we have, and the things we have are things of very great moment; for the most part that that people are discontent and murmur for the want of, it is, because they have not such things as reprobates have, or may have; why should'st thou be troubled so much for the want of that that a man or woman may have and yet be a Reprobate, as that thy estate is not so great, thy health not so perfect, thy credit not so much, thou maiest have all those things and yet be a Reprobate; now wilt thou be discontent for that that a Reprobate may have? I shall give you the example of a couple of godly men meeting together, *Anthony* and *Diddimus*, *Diddimus* was blind; and yet a man of very excellent parts and graces, *Anthony* ask'd him if he was not troubled at this his want of sight, he confest he was, but (saith he) shal you be troubled at the want of what flies and dogs have, and not rather rejoyce and be thankful that you have what Angels have? God hath given you those good things that makes Angels glorious, is not that enough to you, though you want that thing a flie hath? And so a Christian should reason the case with himself, What am I discontented for? I am discontented for want of that that a Dog may have, that a Devil may have, that a Reprobate may have, shal I be discontent for not having that, whereas God hath given me that that makes Angels glorious? *Blessed be God* (saith the Apostle in Ephes. 1. 3.) *that hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Heavenly places.* It may be thou hast not so great bles-

sings in earthly places as some others have, but if the Lord hath blessed thee in Heavenly places, that should content thee, there's blessings in Heaven, and he hath set thee here for the present as it were in Heaven, in a Heavenly place; The consideration of the greatness of mercies that we have, and the littleness of the things that God hath denied us, is a very powerful consideration to work this Grace of Contentment.

The Second CONSIDERATION.

The Consideration. *That God is beforehand with us with his mercies, should content us* (I spake to this as an aggravation of our discontent, but now I shal use it as a consideration to help us to Contentment) Thou wanteſt many comforts now, but hath not God been beforehand with thee heretofore? Oh thou hast had mercy enough already to make thee spend al the strength thou hast, and time thou shalt live, to bless God for what thou hast had already. I remember I have read of a good man that had liv'd to fifty yeers of age and enjoyed his health for eight and forty yeers exceeding wel, and liv'd in prosperity, and the two last yeers his Body was exceedingly diseased, he had the Strangury, and was in great pain; but he reasoned the case with himself thus; Oh Lord thou mightest have made all my life to have been a life of torment and pain, but thou hast let me have eight and forty yeers in health: I wil praise thy mercies for what I have had, and wil praise thy Justice for what now I feel. Oh it's a good consideration for us to think that God is beforehand with us in the way of mercy: Suppose God should now take away your estates from some of you that have lived comfortably a great while, you wil say, That aggravates our misery that we have had estates; but it is through thy unthankfulness that it doth so; we should bless God for what we have had, and not think that we are worse because we have had thus and thus, we might have been alwaies miserable, and certainly that mans condition is not very miserable that hath no other greater aggravation of his misery but because once he was happy If there be nothing else to make you miserable, that is no such aggravation but that thou maiest bear it, for there is much mercy

cy in that that thou had'ſt once, and therefore let that content thee.

The Third CONSIDERATION.

The Conſideration of the abundance of mercies that God beſtowes, and we enjoy. It is a ſpeech of *Luther*, (ſaith he) the Sea of Gods mercy ſhould ſwallow up al our particular afflictions, name anie affliction that is upon thee, there's a Sea of mercy to ſwallow it up. If you powr a Pail ful of water on the floor of your houſe it makes a great ſhow, but if you throw it into the Sea, there is no appearance of it; ſo afflictions conſidered in themſelves we think they are verie great, but let them be conſidered with the Sea of Gods mercies we do enjoy, then they are not ſo much, they are nothing in compariſon.

The Fourth CONSIDERATION.

Conſider the way of God towards all creatures, God carries on al creatures in a viciſſitude of ſeveral conditions; as thus, we have not alwaies Summer, but Winter ſucceeds Summer; we have not alwaies day, but Day and Night; we have not alwaies fair weather, but fair and foul; the vegetive creatures do not alwaies flouriſh, but the ſap is in the root and they ſeem as if they were dead: there's a viciſſitude of all things in the world: the Sun doth not ſhine alwaies to us here, but there is darkneſs comes after light; now ſeeing God hath ſo ordered things with all creatures that there is a mixture of conditions; why ſhould we think it much that there ſhould be a viciſſitude of conditions with us, ſometimes in a way of proſpericie, and ſometimes in a way of affliction.

The Fifth CONSIDERATION.

A further Conſideration is this, *The Creatures do ſuffer for us, why ſhould not we be willing to ſuffer, to be ſerviceable to God?* God ſubjects other creatures, they are fain to loſe their lives for us, to loſe what ever beautie and excellence they have to be ſerviceable to us, why ſhould not we be willing to part with any thing

thing in way of service for God; certainly there is not so great a distance between other creatures and Man-kind, as there is between Man-kind and God. Tis an expression of that Martyr Master *Hooper*, that we read of in the Book of Martyrs, in laboring to work his own heart, and the hearts of others to contentedness in the mid'st of his sufferings; he hath this similitude, and you may be put in mind of that everie day, (saith he) I look upon the creature, and see what it suffers to be useful to me; as thus; The bruit beasts must die, must be rosted in the fire, and boyl'd, must come upon the trencher, be hackt al in pieces, must be chewed in the mouth, and in the stomach turn'd to that which is loathsom if one should behold it, and al to nourish me, to be useful to my body; and shal not I be willing to be made any thing for God, for his Service? what Abundance of alterations the creature comes under to be made useful for me, to preserve me; then if God wil do so with me for his use, as he doth subject the creatures to me for my use, why should not I rest contented? If God wil take away my estate, and make me poor, if God wil take away my life, hack me in pieces, put me in prison, whatsoever he doth, yet I shal not suffer more for God then the creature doth for me, and surely I am infinitely more bound to God than the creature is to me, and there is not so much difference between me and the creature as between me and God: such Considerations as these wrought the heart of that Martyr to contentedness in his sufferings. And everie time the creature is upon your trenchers you may think, What! doth God make the creature suffer for my use? not only for my nourishment, but for my delight; what am I then in respect of the infinite God?

The Sixth CONSIDERATION.

Another Consideration for the working of Contentment, it is *To consider that we have but a little time in this world.* If thou be'st godly thou shalt never suffer but only in this world; why do but shut your eyes and presently another life is come, as that Martyr said to his fellow Martyr, Do but shut your eyes, (saith he) and the next time they are opened you shal be in another

ther world. *Athanasius* saith, it is but a little cloud (when he was banished) and it will be over (notwithstanding) presently. These afflictions they are but for a moment. A Marriner when he is abroad doth not think it much if a storm arises, especially if he can see the Heavens cleer beyond it, saith he, it will be over presently. Consider we have not long to live, it may be it may be over before our daies be at an end, but suppose it should not, death wil put an end to al, al afflictions and troubles wil soon be at an end by death.

The Seventh CONSIDERATION.

Consider the condition that others have been in that have been our betters. We made some use of that before to shew the evil of discontentment: But further to work this upon our hearts, it is a mighty Argument to work upon our hearts a contentedness in any condition.

Thou many times doest consider who are above thee, but consider who are under thee.

Jacob that was the heir both of *Abraham* and *Isaac*, for the blessing was upon him, and the Promise ran along in him, yet was in a poor mean condition. *Abraham* that was his Grandfather was able to make a kind of Army of his own houshold, 200. to fight with the King, yet *Jacob* his Grand-child he goes over Jordan with a staff, and lives in a very poor and mean condition for a long time: and *Moses* that might have had al the treasures in *Egypt*, and as some Historians say of him; *Pharaohs* Daughter adopted him for her son, because *Pharaoh* had no heir for the Crown, and so he was like to have come to the Crown, yet what a low condition did he live in when he went to live with *Jethro* his Father in law 40 yeers together, afterward when he returned to *Egypt*, he and his wife and children, and al that he had, and yet he had but one beast to carry him to *Egypt*, he went in a mean condition when he went from his Father in law to *Egypt* back again.

And *Elijah* we know how he was fed with Ravens, and how he was fain to shift for his life from time to time, and run into the wilderness up and down, and so did *Elisha*, he was divers

times

times in a very low condition, the Prophets of God they were to be hid in a cave by *Obadiah*, and there to be fed with bread and water, and the Prophet *Jeremiah* put into a Dungeon, and Oh how was he used! and it were an endles thing to name the particulars of the great sufferings of the people of God. In former times we have sometimes made use of this Argument other waies, the great Instruments of God in the first Reformation they lived in great straights, in a very low condition, even *Luther* himself when he was to die (saith he) Lord (though he were a man of such publick use, and was a great man in the Courts of Princes) Lord I have neither House nor Lands, nor Estate to leave any thing to Wife or Children, but I commit them to thee: and so *Musculus* that was a very choise Instrument of God in his time, though he was a man that was worth even a Kingdom for excellency of his spirit, and learning, for he was one of the learnedst men of his time, yet sometimes he was put to dig in the common ditch to get bread for his family. What would we do if we were in such a condition as these men were? But above al set Christ before us, that professes that the Birds of the air had nests, and the Foxes had holes, yet the Son of man had no place to hide his head in, that low condition he was in; the consideration of such things as these are very useful. It is likewise useful for men and women of estates to go to poor peoples houses and see how they live, to go to Hospitals, and see the wounds of Soldiers and others, and to see the lamentable condition that people live in that live in some Alms-houses, and what poor fare they have, and what straights they are put to; you hear sometimes of them, but if you went to see them it would not only stir up charity in your selves towards them, but stir up thankfulnes in your hearts towards God, it would be a special means to help you against any discontent, you would go away and see cause to bless God and say, if I were in such a condition as they are in what should I do? how could I bear it? and yet what reason is there that God doth so order and dispose of things that they should be so low in their estates and I so high: I know no reason but free grace, God wil have mercie upon whom he wil have mercie: These are some good Considerations for the furtherance of Contentment.

The

The Eighth CONSIDERATION.

A further Consideration may be this, *That before your conversion, before God wrought upon your souls, you were contented then with the world without grace, though you had no interest in God nor Christ; why cannot you now be contented with grace & spiritual things without the world?* If you your selves were content with the world without grace, ther's reason you should be content with grace without the world: Certainly ther's infinitely more reason. Yea, you see that many men of the world have a kind of Contentment, do not murmur nor repine when the world comes though they have no interest in God and Christ. Then can't not thou have as much Contentment with God and Christ without the world, as they can with the world without God and Christ? This is infinite shame it should be so.

The Ninth CONSIDERATION.

Yea consider when God hath given thee such Contentment, thou hast not given him the glorie. When God hath let thee have thy hearts desire, what hast thou done with thy hearts desire? thou hast not been the better for it, it may be thou hast been the worl many times, and therefore let that satisfie thee: I meet with crosses, but when I had Contentment and al things comming in, God had but little or no glorie from me, and therefore let that be a means now to quiet me in my discontented thoughts.

The Tenth CONSIDERATION.

Yea lastly, Consider al the experience that you have had of Gods doing good unto you in the want of many comforts. When God crosses you, have you never had experience of abundance of good in afflictions? It's true, when a Minister only tels men that God will work good out of their afflictions, they hear them speak, and think they speak like good men, but they feel little or no good, they feel nothing but pain, but when we cannot only say to you, that God hath said he will

work good out of your afflictions, but we can say to you that you your selves have found it so by experience, that God hath made former afflictions to be great benefits to you, and that you would not have been without them, or without the good that comes by them for a world; such experiences will exceedingly quiet the heart and work it to Contentment: therfore think thus with thy self, Lord, why may not this affliction work as great a good upon me as afflictions have done hereto-fore? Perhaps you may find many other Considerations besides in your own meditations, these are the principal ones that I have thought upon: I'le only ad one word more to this, of one that once was a great Merchant and Trades-man, and it happened on a time that he suffered Ship-rack, and saith he, I never made a better voyage and sail'd better than at that time that I suffered Ship-rack: this was a strange speech (his name was *Zeno*) that he should never make a better voyage: it would be a strange paradox to you that are Marriners, to say, that that's a good voyage when you suffer Ship-rack: but he meant because he got so much good by it, God was pleased to bless it so far to him that he gained so much unto his soul by it, so much soul riches that he made account it was the best voyage that ever he had: and truly, sometimes it is so, yea, to you that are godly I make no question but you find it so, that your worst voyages have proved your best, when you have met with the greatest crosses in a voyage, God hath been pleased to turn them to a greater good to you in some other way. It's true, we may not desire crosses that they may be turned to other advantages; but when God in his providence doth so order things, that you meet with ill voyages, you may expect that God will turn them to a greater good, and those that have been exercised in the waies of Godliness any long time, I make no question but they have abundance of experience that they have gain'd by them: You know sometimes it's better to be in a little Ship, for they have advantage of the greater ones in storms many times in a storm a little Ship can thrust into a shallow place and so be safe, but your great Ships cannot, they must be abroad and toss't up and down in the storm and tempest, and so many times split against the rocks. And so it may be God sees there is a storm

storms coming, and if thou beest in thy great Ship thou maiest be split upon rocks and sands, God therefore doth put thee into a lesser vessel that thou maist be more safe. We will lay asi'e the speaking of those considerations now, but I would not have you lay them aside and put them out of your thoughts, but labor (those especially that most concern you) to make use of them in the needful time when you find anie discontentednes of spirit to arise in you.

But the main thing that I intend for this Exercise, It is propounding Directions what to do for the helping of our hearts to contentment. For as for anie further Considerations we have prevented the speaking largely of them, because we have opened the most things in shewing what the lessons are that Christ teaches men, when he brings them into his School, to teach them this Art. I say there we have spoken of the special things that are most considerable for the helping of us to this Grace of Contentment. Therfore now al that I shal further do about this point, shal be the giving of some Directions what course to take that we may come to attain this Grace of Contentment.

The Furst DIRECTION.

The First is this, All the rules and helps in the world wil do us little good except we get a temper within in our hearts; you can never make a Ship go steadie with propping of it without, you know there must be ballast within the Ship, that must make it go steadie: And so there is nothing without us that can keep our hearts in a steadie constant way but that which is within us, Grace is within the soul and that wil do it.

The Second DIRECTION.

Secondlie, If you would get a contented life, do not gripe too much of the world, do not take in more of the business of the world than God calls you to, be not greedie of taking in a great deal of the world, if a man will go among thorns when he may go in a plainer way, there is not reason that this

man should complain that he is prick't with them; thou goest among thorns, is it thy way? must you of necessitie go among them? then it's another matter, but if thou wilt electively chuse that way when thou maist go another, then thou hast no cause to complain; so for men and women that wil put themselves upon things of the world that they need not, then no marvail though they be prick't, and meet with that that doth disquiet them? for such is the Nature of al things here in the world, that everie thing hath some prick or other in it, we are like to meet with disappointments, and discontentments in everie thing we meddle with, and therefore those that have least to do in the world, (that is except God calls them to it, we must put in that) they are like to meet with manie things that wil discontent them.

The Third DIRECTION.

Thirdly, Be sure of thy call to everie business thou goest about, though it be in the least business be sure of thy call to it; then whatever thou meetest withal, thou maiest quiet thy heart with this, I know I am where God would have me; there's nothing in the world wil quiet the heart so much as this; when I meet with any crosses, I know I am where God would have me, in my place and calling, I am about the work that God hath set me, Oh this wil quiet and content thee when thou meetest with trouble: that that God calls a man to, with that he may have comfort whatever befals him, God is to look to thee, and to see thee blest if thou beest in the work God calls thee to.

The Fourth DIRECTION.

And especially if I add a Fourth Rule, and that is, *That I walk by rule in that work I am call'd to.* I am call'd to such a business, but I must manage this work that I am call'd to by Rule, I must walk by the word, order my self in this business according to Gods mind so far as I am able, then add this to the other, and then the quiet and peace of that soul may be made even perfect in a kind, when I know it is not the work I put my self upon but God hath called me to it, and I walk by the

the rule of the Word in it, then let come what will come, God he is to take care of me there. It was a speech of a Heathen (saith he) if thou wilt subject al things to thy self, do thou subject thy self to reason, and by that thou wilt make all things to be under thee; I may add a little more to it, if you wil subject al things under you, subject your self to God, and then the truth is al things are under you: It hath been that which manie times we have hinted, the reason why manie of our Gentrie have been so malignant among us is, because they are willing to be slaves themselves under some above them at Court, so they may keep their neighbours under to be slaves to them: for you know anie man heretofore that was great at the Court, he could crush anie Countrie man that he was angrie withal. If there were an Arbitrarie Government, then all those that would be willing to be Vassals and slaves to the Prince, they can make al others Vassals and slaves to them. Now be thou willing to be a vassal & slave to God, to be absolutelie under Gods command, and then (I say) all things in the world are under thee, *All are yours* (saith the Apostle) *Life and Death* every thing is yours, and you are Christs, and Christ is Gods: All things in the world are serviceable to that man or woman that is serviceable to God. It is a mighrie commendation of Gods service, be thou willing to be serviceable to God, and God makes all things in the world to be thy servants, for so they are. You will say, How are they my servants, I cannot command them? They are servants in this, that God doth order them all to work for thy good, there's nothing in the world but (saith God) it shal work for thy good, and be serviceable to thee, if thou wilt be serviceable to me who would not be now Gods Servant? Subject thy self to God, and all things shal be subjected to thee. Now so long as we keep within our bounds we are under protection, but if once we break our bounds we must expect it should be with us as it is with the Deer in the Park; while the Deer keeps within the pale, there is no Dogs come upon them, but they can feed quietly, but let the Deer be got without the pale, and then every Dog in the Countrie wil be hunting after them: so it is with men, let men and women keep within the bounds of the Command of

God

God, of the rule that God hath set them in his Word, and then they are protected by God, and they may go about their business with peace, and never be troubled for any thing, but cast all their care upon God; God provides for them, but if they will go beyond the pale, if they will pass their bounds, then they may expect to meet with troubles, and afflictions, and discontent; and therefore that is a fourth Direction. Walk by rule.

The Fifth DIRECTION.

A fift Rule is this, *Exercise much faith, that is the way for contentedness.* After thou hast done with all considerations that reason may suggest to thee, if thou findest that those do not do it, Oh then call for grace of faith, a man may go very far with the use of reason alone to help him to Contentment, but when reason is at a non-plus, then set faith at work. It was a speech of the reverend Divine master *Perkins* that God made so instrumental in his time, the life of faith (saith he) it is a true life indeed, the only life. Exercise faith not only in that promise that all shall work together for good to them that fear God, but likewise exercise faith in God himself, as well as in his Word in the Attributes of God. It was a speech of *Socrates* a Heathen, (saith he) since God is so careful for you, what need you be careful for any thing your selves? It was a strange speech of a Heathen.

Oh Christian! if thou hast any faith, in the time of extremity, think thus, This is the time that God calls for the exercise of faith, what canst thou do with thy faith if thou canst not quiet thy heart in discontent It was the speech of one *Theodosius* that had been a King, and afterwards was brought to such a low condition to get his living by being a School-master, one comes and asks him, What have you got by your Philosophy from *Plato* and others? What have I got (saith he, I have got this, That though my condition be changed from so high a condition to so low, yet I have got this, I can be content. So what doest thou get by being a Beleever, a Christian? what canst thou do by thy faith? I can do this, I can in all estates cast my care upon God, cast my burden upon God, I can commit my way

to

to God in peace, faith can do this. Therefore when reason can go no higher, let faith get upon the shoulders of reason and say, I see land though reason cannot see it, I see good that will come out of all this evil.

Exercise faith in thy often resignation of thy self to God, in giving of thy self up to God and his wayes, the more thou dost in a beleeving way surrender up thy self to God, the more quiet and peace wilt thou have; that's the fift thing.

The Sixth DIRECTION.

The sixth Direction for Contentment is, *To labor to be spiritually minded*; that is, be often in meditation of the things that are above, *If we be risen with Christ* (saith the Scripture) *let us seek the things that are above, where Christ is, that sits at the right hand of God. Col.* 3. 1. Be much in spiritual thoughts, in conversing with things above; many Christians that have an interest in the things of Heaven yet converse but very little with them, their meditations are not much upon Heavenly things. It is that that some give as the reason why *Adam* did not see his nakedness, some think that he had so much converse with God and with things above Sence, that he did not so much mind or think of nakedness what it was; but whether that were so or no I will not say, but this I say and am certain of, the reason why we are so troubled with our nakedness with any wants that we have, it's because we converse so little with God, so little with spiritual things, the conversing with spiritual things would lift us above the things of the world; Those that are but or stung with a Snake, it is because they tread upon the ground, if they could be lifted up above the earth they need never fear to be stung with the Snakes that are crawling underneath: so I may compare the sinful distemper of murmuring, and the temptations and evils that come from thence to be like Snakes that crawl up and down below, but if we could get higher we should not be stung by them. A Heavenly Conversation is the way for Contentment.

The Seventh DIRECTION.

A seventh rule is, *Do not promise to your selves too much beforehand, do not make account of too great things:* It is good for us to take hold very low and not think to pitch too high, do not soar too high in your thoughts beforehand, to think, Oh if I had this and this, and imagine great matters to your selves, but be as good *Jacob*, you know he was a man that lived a very contented life in a meane condition, (saith he) *Lord if I may but have cloaths to put on, and meat to eat*; he look'd no higher, he was content with that: so if we would not pitch our thoughts high and think that we might have what others have, so much, and so much, when we meet with disappointments we would not be so much troubled: and so *Paul*, *if we have but meat and drink, and cloathing, we will be therewith content*; he did not soar too high a lore, those that look at high things in the world they meet with disappointments and so they come to be discontent; be as high as you will in spiritual meditations, God gives liberty there to any one of you to be as high as you will above Angels, but for your outward estate God would not have you aim at high things, *Seekest thou great things* (saith the Lord to *Baruch*) *seek them not, you shall have your life for a prey*. In these times especially it were a very great evil for any to aim at great things, *Seek them not*, be willing to take hold low, and to creep low, and if God doth raise thee thou shalt have cause to bless him, but if thou shouldest not be raised there would not be much trouble, one that creeps low cannot fall far, but it is those that are on high whose fall doth bruise them most; that is a good rule, Promise not your selves great matters, neither aim at any great things in the world.

The Eighth DIRECTION.

Labor to get your hearts mortified to the world, dead to the world. We must not content our selves that we have gotten some reasoning above the vanity of the creature, & such kind of things as these are, but we must exercise mortification, and be crucified to the world, saith *Paul*, *I die daily*, we should die daily to the

the world, *We are baptized into the death of Christ*, that is to signifie that we have taken such a profession as to profess to be even as dead men to the world; now there's no crosses that falls out in the world that doth trouble those that are dead, if our hearts were dead to the world we should not be much troubled with the changes of the world, nor the tossings about of worldly things. As it is very observable in those Soldiers that came to break the bones of Christ, they brake the legs of one that was crucified with him, and of the other, but when they came to Christ they found he was dead, and so thy did not break his legs, there was a providence in it, to fulfil a Propheſie, but because they found he was dead they did not break his bones. Let afflictions and trouble find thee with a mortified heart to the world and they wil not break thy bones; the bones of those that are broken by crosses and afflictions are those that are alive to the world, that are not dead to the world; but one that hath a mortified heart and dead to the world, no afflictions or troubles wil break the bones of such a one, that is, they wil not be very grievous or painful to such a one as is mortified to the world: This I fear is a myſtery and riddle to many, for one to be dead to the world, to be mortified to the world. Now it is not my work to open to you what Mortification is, or death to the world is, but only thus, To have our hearts so taken off from the things of the world, as to use them as if one used them not, not to make account that our lives, our comforts, our happineſs doth consist in these things, they are things that are of another nature that our happineſs doth consist in, and we may be happy without these, this is a kind of deadneſs to the world.

The Ninth DIRECTION.

Let not men and women pore too much upon their afflictions, that is, buſie their thoughts too much to look down into their afflictions; you shal have many people that al their thoughts are taken up about what their crosses and afflictions are, they are altogether thinking and speaking of them, it's just with them as with a child that hath a sore about him, his finger is

alwaies upon the sore; and so men and women their thoughts are alwaies upon their afflictions, when they awake in the night their thoughts are upon their afflictions, and when they converse with others (nay it may be when they are praying to God) they are thinking of their afflictions. Oh! no mervail though you live a discontented life, if your thoughts be alwaies poring upon such things, you should rather labor to have your thoughts upon those things that may comfort you: You shal have many that if you propound any rule to them to do them good, they take it wel while they are with you, and thank you for it, but when they are gone they soon forget it. It is very observable of *Jacob*, that when his wife died in Child-birth, his wife called the child *Ben-oni*, that is, a son of sorrows; now *Jacob*, he thought with himself, if I should cal this child *Ben-oni*, every time that I name him it wil put me in mind of the death of my dear wife, and of that affliction, and that wil be a continued affliction to me, therefore I wil not have my child have that name; and so the text saith, that *Jacob* called his name *Benjamin*, and that was, the son of my right hand: now this is to shew us thus much, that when afflictions befall us we should not give way to have our thoughts continually upon them, but rather upon those things that may stir up our thankfulness to God for mercies. It is the Similitude of *Basil* a learned man, saith he, It is in this case as it is with men and women that have sore eyes, now it's not fit for those to be alwaies looking upon the fire, or upon the beams of the Sun; no (saith he) one that hath sore eyes must get things that are sutable to him, and such objects that are fit for one that hath such weak eyes, therefore they wil get green colours, as that being a more easie colour and better for weak eyes, and they wil hang a green Sarsnet before their eyes because it is more sutable to them: So weak spirits it's the very same, a man or woman that hath a weak spirit, they must not be looking upon the fire of their afflictions, upon those things that deject, that cast them down, but they are to be looking rather upon that which may be sutable for the healing and helping of them, they should be considering of those things rather than the other. It wil be of very great use and benefit to you if you do lay it to heart, not to be poring alwaies upon afflictions, but upon mercies.

The

The Tenth DIRECTION.

I beseech you obserue this, though you should forget many other. *Make a good interpretation of Gods waies towards you*, if there can be any good interpretation made of Gods waies towards you, make it. You think it much if you have a friend that should alwaies make bad interpretations of your waies towards him, you will take that ill: if you should converse with people that you cannot speak a word in their hearing, but they are ready to make an ill interpretation of it, and take it in an ill sense, you would think their company to be very tedious to you. It is very tedious to the Spirit of God when we make such ill interpretations of his waies towards us. If God deal with us otherwise than we would have him, if there can be any sense worse than other made of it, we will be sure to make it; as thus: When an affliction doth befal you, there may be many good senses made of Gods Works towards you, you should think thus, It may be God intends only to try me by this, it may be God saw my heart too much set upon the Creature, and so intends to shew me what there is in my heart, it may be that God saw that if my estate did continue I should fal into sin, that the better my estate were, the worse my soul would be, it may be God intended only to exercise some Grace, it may be God intends to prepare me for some great work which he hath for me. Thus you should reason.

But we on the contrary make bad interpretations of Gods thus dealing with us, and say, God doth not mean this, surely the Lord means by this, to manifest his wrath and displeasure against me, and this is but a furtherance of further evils that he intends towards me: Just as they did in the Wilderness, *God hath brought us hither to slay us*. This is the worst interpretation that possibly you can make of God waies: Oh! why will you make these worst interpretations when there may be better? In 1 *Cor.* 13. 5. when the Scripture speaks of love, saith the text, *Love thinketh no evil*. Love is of that nature that if there may be ten interpretations made of a thing, if nine of them be naught, and one good, Love will take that which is good and

and leave the other nine; and so though there might be ten interpretations presented to thee concerning Gods waies towards thee, and if but one be good and nine naught, thou shouldest take that one that is good and leave the other nine. I beseech you consider, God doth not deal by you as you deal with him, should God make the worst interpretation of al your waies towards him, as you do of his towards you it would be very ill with you, God is pleased to manifest his love thus to us, to make the best interpretations of what we do, and therefore it is, that God doth put a sense upon the actions of his people that one would think could hardly be, as thus, God is pleased to call those perfect that have but any uprightness of heart in them, he accounteth them perfect, *Be ye perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect*; uprightness in Gods sense is perfection. Now alas when we look into our own hearts we can scarce see any good at all there, and yet God is pleased to make such an interpretation as to say, it is prefect: When we look into our own hearts we can see nothing but uncleanness, God, he calls you his Saints, he calls the meanest Christian that hath the least grace under the greatest corruption, his Saint; you say, we cannot be Saints here, but yet in Gods esteem we are Saints: You know the usual title the holy Ghost gives (in several of the Epistles) to those that had any grace, any uprightness, is, *To the Saints* in such a place; you see what an interpretation God puts upon them, they are Saints to him, and so I might name in divers other particulars, God makes the best interpretation of things; if there be abundance of evil and a little good, God rather passes by the evil and takes notice of the good: That sometimes I have made use of, which is a very observable place in *Peter* concerning *Sarah*, *Sarah* had a speech to her husband in *Genesis*, 18. 12. she called her husband Lord, but there was but that one good word in an ill speech, it was an unbeleeving speech, but yet when the Apostle mentions that speech in 1 *Pet.* 3. 6. the holy Ghost leaves all the ill, and commends her for calling her husband Lord, for putting a reverend title upon her husband; thus how graciously doth God deal with us? If there be but one good word among a great many ill, what an interpretation God makes! so should we do, if there be but any

one

one good interpretation that we can make of a thing we ſhould rather make uſe of the good one than of the ill; Oh my brethren, (I would I could now ſpeak onlie to ſuch as are godlie) retain good thoughts of God, take heed of judging God to be a hard maſter, make good interpretations of his waies, and that's a ſpecial means to help you to contentment in all your courſes.

The Eleventh DIRCTION.

Do not ſo much regard the fancies of other men, as what indeed you feel your ſelves; for the reaſon of our diſcontentment manie times, is rather from the fancies of other men than from what we find we want our ſelves, we think povertie to be ſuch a great evil, why? becauſe it is ſo eſteemd by others, more than what people feel in it themſelves, except they be in extremitie of povertie: I'le give you an evident demonſtration that almoſt all the diſcontent in the world is rather from the fancies of others than from the evil that is upon themſelves. You that think your eſtates to be low, and you are therupon diſcontent, and it is a grevious affliction to you, but if all men in the World were poorer than you, then you would not be diſcontent, then you would rejoyce in your eſtates though you had not a pennie more than you have: As take a man that can get but his twelve pence a day, and you will ſay, this were but a poor thing to maintain a familie? but ſuppoſe there were no man in the world that had more than this, yea that all other men but your ſelves had ſomewhat leſs wages than you, then you would think your condition prettie good; you ſhould have no more then than you have now, therfore it appears by this that it's rather from the fancies of other men than what you feel that makes you think your condition to be ſo grievous, for if al the men in the world look't upon you as happie, no re happie than themſelves, then you would be contented; Oh let not your happineſs depend upon the fancies of other men. It is a ſpeech of *Chryſoſtom* I remember in this verie caſe, Let us not make the people in this caſe to be our Lords, as we muſt not make men to be the Lords of our faith, ſo not the Lords of our comforts; that is, that our comfort ſhould depnd more upon their imaginations;

ginations than upon what we feel in our selves. It may be others think you to be in an afflicted condition yea but I thank God, for my self I do not so apprehend it, were it not for the disgrace, dis-esteem and slightings of other men, my condition would not be so bad to me as now it is; this is that which makes my condition afflictive.

The Twelfth DIRECTION.

Be not inordinately taken up with the comforts of this world when you have them. When you have them do not take too much content in them: that's a certain rule that, Look how inordinate any man or woman is in sorrow when a comfort is taken from them, so much immoderate were they in the rejoycing in the comfort when they had it: as now for instance, God takes away a child and you are inordinately sorrowful, beyond what God allows in a natural or Christian way, now though I never knew before how your heart was towards the child, yet when I see this (though you be a meer stranger to me) I may without breach of charitie conclude that your heart was immoderately set upon your child or husband, or upon any other comfort that I see you grieving for when God hath taken it away; If you hear ill tidings about your estates, and your hearts are dijected immoderately, and you are in a discontented way because of such and such a crosse, certainly your hearts were immoderatly set upon the world; and so likewise for your credit if you hear others report this or that ill of you, and your hearts are dejected because you think you suffer in your name, your hearts were inordinately set upon your name and credit; now therefore the way for you not to be immoderate in your sorrows for afflictions, it is not to be immoderate in your love and delights when you have prosperity. And these are the principal Directions for our help that we may live quiet, and contented lives.

My brethren, to conclude all for this point, If I could tell you that I knew how to shew you a way never to be in want of anie thing, I make no question but then we should have much flocking to such a Sermon, when a man should undertake to

manifeſt to people that they ſhould never be in want any more, but I have been now preaching unto you that that comes to as much, that which countervails this, that which is in effect all one. Is it not almoſt al one, never to be in want, or never to be without Contentment? that man or woman that is never without a contented ſpirit, truly, can never be ſaid to want much, Oh! the World holds forth a way ful of comfort and peace to the people of God even in this world, you may live happie lives in the midſt of al the ſtorms and tempeſts in the world, there is an Ark that you may come into, and no men in the world may live ſuch comfortable, cheerful, and contented lives as Saints of God: Oh that we had learn'd this leſſon: I have been many Sermons about this Leſſon of Contentment, but I am afraid that you wil be Longer in Learning of it than I have been preaching of it; it is a harder thing to learn it than it is to ſpeak or preach it. (I remember) I have read of one man reading of that place in the 39. *Pſalm, I wil take heed that I offend not with my tongue*: ſaith he, I have been this 38. yeers a learning this leſſon and have not learned it throughly. The truth is, there are many (I am afraid) that have been profeſſors neer eight and thirtie yeers have hardly learn't this leſſon; it were a good leſſon for young Profeſſors to begin to learn this betimes. But now, this leſſon of Chriſtian Contentment it is as hard; and perhaps you may be many yeers in learning it: I am afraid there be ſome Chriſtians that have not yet learned, *Not to offend groſly with their tongues*: The Scripture ſaith, *all a mans Religion is vain, if he cannot bridle his tongue*; therefore, thoſe that make any profeſſion of godlineſs, one would think they ſhould quickly learn this leſſon, ſuch a leſſon that except learned, it makes al their Religion vain: But for this Leſſon of Chriſtian Contentment it may take up more time to learn, and there's many that are learning it al the daies of their lives and yet are not Proficients; but God forbid that it ſhould be ſaid of any of us concerning this Leſſon, as the Apoſtle ſaith of Widows in *Timothy, That they were ever learning & never came to the knowledg of the truth*. Oh let us not be ever larning this Leſſon of Contentment and yet never come to have skil in it. You would think it much if you had uſed the Sea

twenty,

ty yeers, and yet to have attain'd to no skill in your art of Navigation, you wil say, I have used the Sea 20. or 30. yeers and I hope I may know by this time what belongs to Sea; Oh that you would but say so in respect of the Art of Christianity! When there is any thing that's spoken concerning the duty of a Christian. Oh that Christians could but say I have been a Christian this long, and I hope I am not to seek in such a thing that is so necessary for a Christian; here is a necessary lesson for a Christian that *Paul* said. *He had learned in all estates therewith to be content*, Oh! be not content with your selves til you have learned this lesson of Christian Contentment, gotten some better skill in it than heretofore.

Now there is in the text another Lesson which is a hard Lesson, *I have learned to Abound*, that doth not so neerly concern us at this time, because the times are afflictive times, and there is now (more than ordinary) an uncertainty in all things in the world, in such times as these are, there is a few that have such an abundance that they need to be much taught in that lesson.

FINIS.

THE SAINTS DUTY IN TIMES OF EXTREMITY.

WHAT the certainty of the cauſe of thoſe fears that are upon the hearts of people is not yet apparent, but that there are many diſtracted fears in their hearts, that is apparent to the full; and therefore though I prepared for that ordinary courſe as formerly, yet for this time I deſire that you would turn to that Scripture (that I might ſpeak a word in ſeaſon) in.

Exodus, 14. part of the 13. verſe.

Stand ſtill, and ſee the Salvation of the Lord.

THE beginning of the verſe is thus. *And* Moſes *ſaith unto the people, Fear ye not, ſtand ſtill, and ſee the ſalvation of the Lord.* In the former Chapter we have *Pharaoh* diſmiſſing *Iſrael* out of *Egypt*: In this Chapter we have him purſuing *Iſrael* with a new heated fury, againſt al common ſenſe & reaſon, his malice and rage beſotted him, becauſe God intented to deſtroy him; though Gods hand appeared gloriouſly for his *People* before, yet

Pharaoh wil not see the Majesty of the Lord, but he shal see it; he gathers al the strength that possibly he can, and seems too rash in his way he overtakes, and overtakes them in a place of the greatest advantage that possibly could be; for the Text saith, that they were before *Pi-habiroth*, in the first verse, between *Migdol* and the Sea, over against *Baal-zephon*; and that by Gods appointment too: they were there when *Pharaoh* comes to find them, there the Sea is before them, al the strength of *Egypt* is behind them, and they were at *Pi-habiroth Caverna rupibus inclusa*, so turn'd by some, not the proper signification, for *Pi* is the mouth, and *habiroth* that signifies *for amen*; they were got into a hole (as it were) into the mouth of a hole, that was compassed about with rocks on each side, that had high rocks about it, so the word imports; and not only so, but between *Migdol* over against *Baal-zephon*, *Migdol* signifies a Tower, so that in that place the *Egyptians* had a Tower built likewise: besides the advantage of the rocks, and of the hills, there was a Tower built for their further strengthening, and there the people of *Israel* were, an unarmed people; yet not only by the Power, but they were over against *Baal-zephon*. I remember in the last Exercise, I shewed you what *Baal* was, & what several *Baals* there were that the Heathens worshipped for their gods, a general name it is for more for any other Idol: This *Baal-zephon* it was a god that they worshipped upon this ground, they had an Idol set in that place, at the going out of *Egypt*, that was to watch those that were to go out, for so *zephon* comes of *quia speculatus est*, the god was to watch, was to stand and watch any run-away servant, or any people that did go out of *Egypt* without any leave, they trusting in this *Baal*, that he would stop them, and stay them, and he was set in that place for that very purpose; and thereupon his name was *Baal-zephon*: As Conjurers by their Magick Arts wil have chain spels, (as it is that Mal Hogmen in such a place, they shal not go out of such an Out-yard, or such a yard where they common:) So the *Egyptians* had there by their Magical Arts, they got (as it was) a Spel, a *Baal-zephon*, a god to stop people in those places where they would have them stopped: that is the meaning of this name of the Idol *Baal-zephon*. So that you see what a strait *Israel* was in upon their going

going out of *Egypt*, they were got before the Sea, the *Egyptians* had at their strength behind, in a hole of rocks and a Tower, and their god to stop them altogether, so that they themselves made sure of them, and said that they were intangled in the Land of the wilderness; Being in those great straits their hearts began to fail them, they began to be extreamly troubled, and in a most grievous distemper of spirit they were coming, and chiding with *Moses*, and said to *Moses* in 11. vers. *Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us to die in the wilderness, therefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt?* We had rather we had continued in *Egypt* still, What! Brought to these straights! these extremities! such a perplexity as we are now in? would to God we had been in *Egypt*: this was the baseness of their spirits, they would rather be under vile bondage, than endure any hazard, than be put to any straits and difficulties. It is the baseness of the spirits of many at this day among us, because they see that those wars that have been taken by the Parliament bring some troublesom difficulties, some straits, they cry out of the times, I would to God we were, as we were before, we were well enough before, we were quiet enough before, we never knew what such straits as these meant before, now we are brought into these perplexities, I, this they have brought us into; & thus they are ready to murmur & repine. O unthankful, unworthy generation! men, women of vile spirits that shall do so. It was a speech of *Cyrus*, speaking unto his Soldiers, The Historian hath this expression of him: It is the part of a true valiant man, either to live honorably, or die honorably, one of these; but that is the part of a base coward, rather to live basely than to die honorably, rather to be under any base servitude, than to be in any hazard of their lives, though perhaps their lives may be saved too, I remember *Philo* tels us even of women, (for in those times, the publick cause of the Kingdom, suffers exceedingly much by the ignorant counsels of the spirits of women) that being in danger of their enemies, of being brought into bondage by them, they took their children and threw them into the rivers, with these words, You that not serve, we had rather see you die than be slaves. I commend not that fact that it was well done, but to show what a spirit the heathen women had

to see their children die rather than have them bondslaves: Indeed, what were our lives worth? were they worth having if we return to our Bondage again? The utmost of our danger is, *our lives*, the killing of our bodies, yet we hope God will preserve them too, but suppose the worst, it is but *death*; but if our lives should not be hazarded now, and if through base cowardise, we should decline the Cause of God, surely our lives would not be worth taking up, the living after that manner we are like to live, in that bondage to these Cavaliers, notorious wretches, blasphemers of God himself, that would make our lives worth very little, nay your children perhaps to be brought up in Popery, and to hold a candle to a Mass-Priest at the Altar; that may be the imployment of your children, if so be that they should live: But these people being now in this extremity, and manifesting so much passion, being in a distemper; *Moses* as one Captain of the Lord comes to the people, and speaks bravely to them, encouraging of them, saith *Moses*, *Fear not, but stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord*: *stand still*, the word is התיצבו *State*, it signifies to settle and compose, to be in a setled condition; it is a reflect word upon our selves so the *Learned know*, that it is to work upon our selves, to form, signifies so, it is as much as if he should say, Do you work upon your own hearts, to get your hearts to *stand still*, work upon your hearts to do that, work arguments upon your spirits, and never leave working until you have wrought your hearts into such a form, as that you may *stand still*, and be quiet: At first even the dearest servants of God will find their hearts to shake in time of hazards and extremities, but when they come to work upon their spirits, to bring arguments to lay to their hearts, there they get some advantage, that their hearts grow quiet quickly: For that we have a notable text in the example of *David*, in the 62. *Psalm*, (saith *David* there, in the 1. and 2. verses) *Truly my soul waiteth upon God from him cometh my salvation, he only is my Rock and my Salvation, he is my Defence, I shal not greatly be moved*; Mark, he begins to exercise Faith and he saies, he shall not *greatly* be moved, as if he should have said, I confess, I cannot say, but that my heart is somewhat stirred, I am somewhat afraid, and I feel some working in my spirit, but

but I hope I shal not greatly be moved; he falls a working upon his heart more, and considers of his innocencie, and of the mischievous device of the ungodly; *How long will ye imagine mischief against a man, ye shal be slain all of you*; then again in the 5. verse, *My soul wait thou only upon God, for my expectation is from him, he only is my Rock*: And then he repeats the words again, after he had been rubbing upon his heart the same meditation, then he fetches in the words again, that he had in the 2. verse, *He only is my Rock and my Salvation*; but mark now, what advantage he gets of himself, in the 6. verse, *He only is my Rock and my Salvation; and my Defence, I shall not be moved*; before, he is my Rock, my Salvation, my Defence, I shall not *greatly be moved*, but after he had been working further upon his own heart, then he gains and saies, now he is my Rock, and my Salvation, and my Defence, I shall *not be moved*; I have overcome these Distracting fears, I have got the advantage and the victory, blessed be God I have overcome them, God is my salvation, and my glory; now he begins to glorie and triumph after he had wrought upon himself; So that he in this did indeed stand still in this phrase, by working upon his own heart, though he was stirred a little at first, yet he got the victorie: So indeed not to be moved, the *Seventy* turn this word, stand stil, *stete* only, but yet the notes upon it, they say it is red likewise *stetite*, that is a standing fast, *stand fast*, it is a word taken from Soldiers in their ranks; Soldiers that are in their ranks when they apprehend a danger, they must not go out of their way, because of the danger, it is as much as their lives are worth to go out of the way, but they must stand, they must *stand stil*, though there be never such danger, yet they must *stand still in their Ranks*: that is the meaning of the word. I shal open more what the meaning of the holie Ghost is by and by, what kind of *stand-still*, this should be; but thus for the word, it is such a *stand stil*, as the Soldiers have in their Ranks, not to go out of their Ranks for fear. The word is used in Scripture divers times for, *standing fast*, as in the 1. of *Philipians*, 27. That you *stand fast* in one spirit; now the word *fast*, is not in the Greek Text, but only the other word in the Greek Text; and so you

have

have the same word in the other Scriptures; in the 1 of the *Corinthians*, 16. 13. *Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, Stente* it is only two words in the Greek, as it is in the English. *stand fast*; so that this *stand*, is not only a standing, but a standing fast, stand still in your Ranks, fast, be not in a hurrie up and down, and be not in a confusion: If upon danger Soldiers should presently be in a confusion in the Armie, what would become of them? and so the truth is, in a City, in any place, where there is any danger, if people grow to a confusion, they are gone, they are lost, you must stand still in your ranks, *stand stil*. There are several *Stand stills*, some very vile and naught and other very good: there is first.

1. *A Stand still, out of amazement*; When a man through fear is at a stand, and dares not stir any further; now this cannot be meant in the text; for *Moses* saith, *Fear not*, but *stand stil*, therfore it is not standing stil our of fear, because I am astonished.

2. *There is a Stand still, out of ignorance*; Because I do not know which way to take; and this is not in the text neither: Thus many in our time, they stand still, they plead ignorance, they stand still, they will be of no side, and they plead ignorance they know not what to do; they say, they know not what to do, one saith one thing, and another saith another thing, the King commands one thing, and the Parliament another, they know not what to do; to go against the King, is it not rebellion? and so they stand still because they plead ignorance, and their consciences are not informed. It hath been the work of divers Ministers, that have hazarded themselves in this to open to you the Counsel of God, and to set your consciences at libertie; divers things I have spoken in this place, but certainlie men do blind their own eyes, and are willing to stand still, to plead ignorance, after so much light revealed: It is strange that any rational man should speak of rebellion now; when as we know, that the King himself sent aid to the *Rochellers*, and that (we know) in the case of their Liberties, and Religion; they took up Arms to defend themselves against their own King, & he sent help to them, surely he did not himself take them to be Rebels, & *King James* in his answer to

Byron

Byron that inveighs against the Protestants in *France*, he doth stand to justifie what the Protestants in *France* did, even *King James* himself in that book of his, in his Answer to *Byron*; and besides we must acknowledg all the Protestant Churches in the world to be Rebels, if it be Rebellion, meerly to take up Arms; Know we not that our own King hath matched his Daughter to the young Prince of *Orange*, now we know the Prince of *Orange* is the General of the States in their Fields, as the Earl of *Essex* is the General of our Forces here; and their business against the King of *Spain* (it was their praise) to defend their Liberties, and Religion, and still they maintain the same quarrel, and the Prince of *Orange* he is their General, and undertakes it: We desire nothing but the maintenance of our Liberty and our Religion, though things be not gone so far yet, as to take *our estates*, yet the Cause that they began withal, it is our Cause, and what the General was there, the same in a kind (there is not great difference) is here; and certainly if it were rebellion, our King would never have match'd his Daughter unto the Son of such a Rebel; if it should be Rebellion meerly to take up Arms to defend Religion, and to defend the Liberties of the Country that are according unto Laws; yea, we know further, that the King himself hath acknowledged our Brethren the Scots, to be loving Subjects, to be his loyal Subjects, do we more than they? do we more in our Cause? nay, have we done so much in our Cause, as they have done? how generally was it there in their Kingdom? And shall be acknowledged they are loving Subjects doing so much, and we be accounted Rebels? surely no man can plead, to stand still through ignorance upon that ground.

3. There is a third *stand still*, the truth is, though it be not through ignorance, it is through a worse principle, and that is of *Neuterizing*; that is, when men though they are informed well enough, yet they stand still to see which will be the strongest side, and are loth to appear yet, they know not which side will most prevail, but they have such a principle in their spirits, to go to the strongest side, which way soever it be, only they will stand still till it appear: My brethren, certainly we can admit of no Neuters in these times; the times

are

are grown to a greater height, than that any should be admitted as a Neuter, either for us or against us; whatsoever is not for us at this time, now coming to this straight, may well be concluded to be against us.

4. There is a fourth wicked *stand still*, and that is out *of sullenness of spirit*; and that is more particular, and that is of many men and women, especially that are in some troubles of conscience, and when they are seeking of God, and performing duties that God requires of them, and do not find that encouragement that their hearts desire, they leave off all, and have no mind to do any thing, but even stand still and die, and wil even sink in a sullen discouragement, and go no further, leave off their work, leave off duty, what should I go on in doing duty, for I get no good by it, I am never a whit the better? and so they stand still out of a sullen discouragement: The Devil himself is the most discouraged Spirit in the world, and yet he is the proudest Spirit in the world; and this standing still out of discouragement, may come out of pride, and stoutness of heart, though you think it is out of humility.

5. There is a sluggish *standing still*, and that is sinful and wicked, when people stand still *because they are idle, and are loth to venture themselves, or to put themselves to trouble, to go forward in any work, this work is tedious*; and thus the sluggard he stands still, and is ready to catch at any Argument, that may plead for his standing still: My brethren this is not that stand still here, that we should stand still and do nothing, and be sluggards; no but the *stand still* here is after we have gone on, and done to the utmost that we are able, that then we should *stand still*, and commit the work to God, as if we had done nothing at al; there is the *stand still*: I shall speak of more presently; As that worthy Divine said, he would labor to preach, as if he expected no assistance, and then he would expect assistance, as if he had not labor'd at all; So Warriers and people in danger, they should prepare in the use of all means, as if they expected no further help, and then they should expect help from God, as if they had used no means at all; so we must use means: As that brave speech of *Joab*, *Come let us play the men*

men, let us fight for our Cities, and the people of our God, and then let God do what ſeemeth him good; then he would ſtand ſtill, and look for his ſalvation of God; a ſpeech even of *Jacob* himſelf, not then a ſluggiſh ſtand ſtill it is no hinderance at all to any preparations that may be uſed: therefore all theſe are naught.

6. There is *an obediential ſtand-ſtil*; that is, for the hearts of men and women to ſtand ſtil, to wait, to know further of Gods mind, what God revealeth, our hearts are willing to yield unto, and we wil liſten to hear what the mind of God further is, what God would have us to do; to ſtand ſtil, to hearken to what the Lord would have us to do, with hearts reſign'd up to him, and reſolved to walk accordingly to it; this is good, and that is ſomewhat of it, but that is not all.

7. There is a *ſtand ſtil* out of *faith*; *a beleeving ſtand ſtil*; and that is when (though in the greateſt extremity) I have uſed what means I can for helping me, yet I ſee my ſelf wrapped up in extremity, I wil now exerciſe faith. Firſt,

1. *To quiet my heart*; to get out of my ſpirit thoſe diſtracting thoughts of that hurry and tumult that there is in the heart, and to get ſilenced, all murmurings, all diſtractions, all giddineſs of ſpirit; and uproar that many times is in the hearts of men and women in time of danger; ſo by faith I come to quiet theſe, and to get my heart to be ſtill, to be ſtill within me: Be ſtil O my ſoul; and therefore the Scripture expreſſes the waiting upon God out of Faith by a word of ſilence, in the 62. *Pſalm*, at the beginning, and verſe 5. *My ſoul waits upon God, it is ſilenced*, ſo the Hebrew word ſignifies, it ſignifies a *ſilence* in God: there is many times in the hearts of men and women (when they apprehend any danger) a great deal of hurrying and noiſe in their hearts, al is in a combuſtion in their hearts; it is a grievous thing to ſee a Citie al in a combuſtion, and in a tumult; there are many men and womens hearts, in as great a tumult upon apprehenſion of danger, as many times a whol Citie is, there is a riſing in their hearts, and a mighty noiſe there: Sometimes they keep (it may be in private and publick exigences) their tongues ſilent, but their

hearts boyl within them: but your hearts muſt be ſilent, you muſt cry to your heart, be ſilent there; my heart is now in a mutiny, and a great deal of ſtir, cry ſilence to your hearts, that your hearts and thoughts may be compoſed; that is the meaning of the word, that there ſhould be a ſetled compoſed frame of ſpirit in the hearts of men and women, in the times of extremity: that is the firſt. Secondly,

2. When it is out of Faith, there *ſhould be a keeping our ſtations til God cals us out*; not to run up and down this way and that way, and to think of nothing but of ſhifting courſes, to ſhift for our ſelves: As in time of danger (I verily beleeve) if we could look into the thoughts of many men and women, they ſcarce have any thought but meerly of ſhifting their place or houſe; they think to ſhift for themſelves: Now we ſhould not buſie our thoughts ſo much about ſhifting, as about quieting our hearts in beleeving: for (my brethren) in times of extremity of danger, God calleth for Courage more than diſcretion; though it's true, Diſcretion is not excluded; yet that is not that explicite and ſpecial work that is called for in times of danger; I mean diſcretion to ſhift for our ſelves; but diſcretion ſo far as may improve courage: the main work that God now cals for at this time, it is Courage and Diſcretion, and Prudence only ſo far as to mannage Courage, and to drive it on further, and to improve it, not to abate it, that is not the Diſcretion certainly that now is called for, but to keep our ſtation.

Queſt. But you will ſay, *In time of danger may we not fly? muſt men keep their ſtations? is it not lawful to avoid danger and to fly? Then we ſhal accuſe many of our brethren, that heretofore have fled in time of danger.*

Anſw. (My Brethren) you are to know, that the caſe now is far different from the caſe that was heretofore; the caſe heretofore was eſpecially (for the preſent) directed againſt particulars, not againſt the general, though there were plots againſt the general, but the hazard and the danger was againſt ſuch, and ſuch particular men, as eſpecially your Miniſters that were moſt faithful and conſcionable, they were the fore front, they did bear the brunt, and it was aimed eſpecially againſt them;

now

now the case is far different when the aim of the Adversary is against particulars, and not against the godly in general; when it is against particulars there may be al lawful means, by an avoiding and flying: when it is against the godly in general then every one should stand still, and keep in their waies and stations, to come in, and ad what strength they can to the publick cause; and certainly those that shall shift then, and think to fly then, God may justly meet with them; as we read of *Jeremiah*, *Urijah*, *Urijah* the Priest flies in publick time of danger, and he was sent for, and catched, and put to death; *Jeremiah* staies, and is saved: But when the case is the danger of particular persons, then it is nothing against this text, to fly in any lawful way; many people will cry out against flying by a lawful way in times of danger, because they think they may shift from flying themselves; and if others that are in danger should not do so, they would be far enough from helping and assisting them in extremities, and yet they will be crying out against it; *Peter Martyr* I remember hath this answer to it; It is just for all the world in this case as a man that hath a dangerous sickness upon him, and the Physitians tel him, there is no way but by taking such strong Physick, or by cutting off a leg, or a limb, now he comes and pleads, I will not so distrust God, and be so impatient of my present pain, as to take such a course to help me, I'le rather continue patient and quiet, and endure my present pain, and trust in God, rather than put my self to any such hazard; now is this man more patient, than another man that wil take such strong Physick, or have a member cut off? Is it through the strength of his patience? No, it is rather through the weakness of his spirit, because the other is a certain great pain and hazard, and while he goes on in the use of ordinary means, he hath a lesser pain, with hope that he may be delivered from a greater, and preserved himself. So this is the Objection against flying in particular danger, because the flying is a certain great suffering, they that have fled, have found it so: now others will rather satisfie themselves to endure a little uncertain suffering, than to go upon a certain great suffering; and that is the very ground. But that this is not against faith at all, to fly in danger, when it is par-

ticularly aimed at particulars, I'le give you but a Scripture or two for that to cleer it, that it is not againſt Faith, It is remarkable (we might ſpend a great deal of our time in this caſe here, but I have done with it) in the 10. of *Matthew*, *When they proſecute you* (ſaith Chriſt) *in this City, fly into another*: he ſpeaks of particular perſecution of this or that body, and not of a whol Kingdon: now flee (ſay they!) we will be more beleeving, and truſt in God, and not be afraid, have we not a good Cauſe, and is not God with us? this would argue too much fear; Mark, in the next words Chriſt ſpeaks after he had given them liberty, and commanded them to fly; (ſaith he) fear them not therefore (though it is the next thing he ſpeaks of in the 28. verſe) *and fear not them that can kil the body*: you ſee theſe two can wel ſtand together, that there is not fear of them that can kil the body, and yet there is a flying; and ſo Chriſt himſelf flies in the 12. of *Matthew*, when he did but hear what *Herod* did to *John*, (when Jeſus knew it, that was when the *Phariſees* ſought him) when he knew it, he did withdraw himſelf in the 12, and 13. verſes, *And when Jeſus heard of it, he departed thence &c.* When he heard but what was done to *John*, Chriſt withdrew himſelf and went away: Therefore it may ſtand with faith, ſo to avoid danger in particular Cauſes: But now when perſecution is general, we are to *ſtand ſtil*, and not avoid our ſtation.

The third thing of this *ſtand ſtil* of faith is, *The looking up for the Salvation of God*, the expecting a good iſſue one way or other; I know not how ſalvation wil come, but that there wil be ſalvation one way or other, that my ſoul reſts upon; I *ſtand not ſtil* out of ſtoutneſs of ſpirit, or becauſe I think I have means enough to reſiſt, whether I have means or no, when I am put into the greateſt extremity, yet I can *ſtand ſtil*, and look for ſalvation. What! *ſtand ſtil*, & look for the ſalvation of the Lord? what talk you of ſalvation (might they ſay to *Moſes*) when there is nothing but deſtruction before us? True, if you look before you, behind you, and without you, and within your ſelves there is nothing but deſtruction, yet look up to Heaven and there is ſalvation, *ſtand ſtil, and ſee the ſalvation of the Lord.* I have done no more than the meer opening of the text, and what is contained

tained in it: There are theſe Four *Doctrinal Concluſions* in the Text.

1. Doct. *That when God is in a way of mercie and ſalvation to his people, he doth many times bring them into ſtraights* even then when he is in a way of *Salvation.*

2. Doct. *That in time of theſe great ſtraights, even the people of God are ſubject to have their hearts to be overwhelmed with trouble, diſtracting fears, and to be diſquieted.*

3. Doct. *That it is our duty to ſtand ſtill, keep quiet, and look for Gods Salvation in the time of the greateſt ſtraights.*

4. Doct. *That the ſight of Gods Salvation coming after ſtraights is a glorious ſight to behold: Stand ſtill, ſee the ſalvation of God,* Theſe are the Four. For the firſt then.

Firſt, *When God is in a way of ſalvation, yet he may and doth divers times bring his people into very great ſtraits.* Truly, this ſtrait in the text is exceeding remarkable: but I'le ſhew you further, how when God was about to ſave this people of *Iſral* out of the Egyptian bondage, (which is the work God hath now to do with us to ſave us out of the Egyptian bondage that we were in, and that we were going further into,) after they were delivered from this ſtraight, from *Pharaoh* and al his hoſt; yet in the 15. Chap. you ſhal find, (the very next Chapter;) after they were come out of the Sea, they preſently wanted water to drink, yea, the waters were bitter they could not drink them (ſaith the text 15. verſ.) *The waters were bitter they could not drink them,* they were ready to periſh for want of water. As ſoon as ever they were delivered out that ſtrait, mark the 16. Chap. they were in another as bad as that, there you ſhall find they want bread, & were ready to ſtarve for hunger; in Chap. 16. 2, 3. *And al the Aſſembly were ready to be killed for hunger* (the text ſaith:) wel *Moſes* cries to God, and God delivered them out of that ſtraight too: In the next Chap. they were in as great a ſtraight too: *They pitched at* Rephidim, *and there they had no water to drink again:* I might go through the ſtory, and ſhew you in the wilderneſs, what great ſtraights God put them in, and yet God was working ſalvation for them. When they came to poſſeſs the Land (becauſe I wil not go thorow the ſtory the time wil not permit) they have Jordan to paſs over without any bridg, whether the

bridges.

bridges were cut down, or whether there were none I cannot tell; but it was more danger to paſs over the bridges (if there were any) becauſe at that time (the text ſaith) it was *that Jordan flowed over all his banks*: ſo then it was the worſt time that could be, when the banks of Jordan were all overflowed, yet God delivered them out of that ſtraight; When they were got over, there I might ſhow you many other ſtraights, but I ſhall mention only one, that was this: The firſt enemy the people of God fought withal in *Canaan*, they were diſcomfited, they were beaten back at the firſt battel that ever they fought, when they came to ſet upon the Land of *Canaan*, and to fight with the adverſary, there the adverſary comes out, and gets the day and makes them fly before them, that was at the fight at *Ai*, *They fled before the men of Ai*, upon this *Joſhua* fel down upon the ground Why Lord! What are we come to this? After al theſe ſtraights that we come now to fight with the people of *Canaan*, and they at the very firſt blow have the day, and make us fly before them now all the people wil come out againſt us. If ſo be people have ſuch diſtracting fears now, ſuppoſe there ſhould be a meeting of both Armies, and you ſhould hear that one Army flies before another, that our Men fly before thoſe that come out againſt them, before the Cavalliers, what a fear and diſtraction would there be then? yet ſo it was with the people of *Iſrael*, though God was coming in with ſuch a mighty hand to deliver them, and to poſſeſs them of *Canaan*, yet at the very firſt blow, they had the worſt, and the people overcame them: It would take a mighty deal of time to ſhew you the ſtraights that *David*, and *Joſiah*, and *Jehoſhaphat*, and *Hezekiah* were in, I'le only give you a word or two about *David*, becauſe it may be a very great help to poor troubled ſpirits in time of ſtraights; *David* he was in ſuch ſtraights ſometimes, that he profeſſes himſelf *even overwhelmed*, *Pſal.* 61. and in the beginning: You ſhal find *Pſal.* 77. 4. *He could not ſpeak*. Many poor ſouls are in grievous afflictions, and when we put them to go and open their hearts to God and men, Oh I cannot ſpeak (ſay they) *David* was in ſuch ſtraights that he could not ſpeak, *yea he could not ſo much as look up*, *Pſal.* 40. 12. not ſo much as look up to God, grievous ſtraights that he was in. And the people of *Iſrael* in their

other

other Captivitie, there were mountains before them; what ſtraights did God put them into? When they were come forth of *Babylon*, In *Zach.4. What art thou O great mountain, that art before them*? But examples wil be needleſs to illuſtrate the thing, it is ſo cleer, that thus was Gods dealing with his people. As with wicked men, when God is in a way of wrath againſt the ungodly, he manie times ſuffers them to proſper in the higheſt way, with the moſt flouriſhing proſperitie that ever they had in their lives: So when he is in a way of ſalvation of his Saints, he lets them be in the loweſt eb that ever they were in all their lives: As in *Job*, 20. ſaith the text there at the 5. verſe, *In the fulneſs of his ſufficience he ſhal be in ſtraights*. In the fulneſs of his ſufficience; what a phraſe is here! A wicked man ſhal be in ſtraits when he is full, when he hath ſufficient (as he thinks,) in the fulneſs of his ſufficiencie he ſhall be in ſtraights: and on the other ſide, a godly man in his greateſt ſtraights, he hath a fulneſs of ſufficience; I will ſhew you *that* cleer, 2 *Cor.* 1. 5. *As the ſufferings of Chriſt abound in us, ſo our conſolation alſo aboundeth by Chriſt*: We have a fulneſs of Conſolation, when we have a fulneſs of ſuffering; yea, not only abound, but *do ſuper-abound*, for ſo the word is in 2 *Cor.*7.4. *I am* (ſaith he) *filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulations*: We are brought into tribulation, into great ſtraights, and I have a fulneſs fill'd with comfort, and exceeding joyful, more than abundantly joyful; ſo the word ſignifies: there is abounding in the other text, but here is a *ſuper* added to it, a *ſuper* abounding, more than joyful, not in times of proſperitie onlie: Carnall hearts neves know how to rejoyce but in times of proſperitie, when they can eat, and drink, and play, then they can be merrie; but the Saints know how to joy, how to be fill'd with joy, how to abound in joy, and how to be exceedingly abounding in joy when they are in tribulation: Thus, as wicked men are in ſtraights in their ſufficiencies, ſo godly men when God is in a way of comfort, they may be in a way of great affliction, and the reaſon of it may be.

1. Reaſon. *Becauſe God will humble his people, when he is in a way of ſalvation*: when God intends the greateſt good to his people, and to raiſe them the higheſt, he is verie careful to

keep

keep them very low; that hath alwaies been the manner of Gods administrations: You see the reason of the peoples having straights in the Wilderness, it was from hence, in the 8. of *Deuteronomy*, there God gives the reason in the second verse, *Thou shalt remember all the way, which the Lord thy God led thee these forty yeers in the wilderness*, to what end? why were they so long in the Wilderness? it was (saith the text) *to humble them*; I brought thee into the wilderness, and it was to humble thee: Doth God (my brethren) bring us into straights, now in these times? Certainly he is in a way of salvation for *England*, he is in a way of salvation to do us good in the latter end, but yet he is bringing us into straights, Oh! we may thank the pride of our spirits, we have not been brought low enough to this very day: There hath been (indeed) some humiliation of some of the people of God, in fasting and praying, they have humbled their souls; but yet though there hath been humble expressions, yet not humble hearts; for after those times they have have had (many of them) exceeding froward spirits, and that argues apparently their hearts are not humbled and broken, when their spirits after dates of humiliation, still should be froward and pettish as before: But especially for the generallity of the Kingdom, how far are we from being an humbled people! we are not yet capable of what mercy God intendeth for us, in this regard, because we are not humbled; Oh the exceeding pettishness, envie, and pride (and worse a great deal) not only in many people of the Land, but even in those that are godly and gracious! how are the spirits of men, of one brother opposite to another! that because there is some difference in judgment in such and such a thing; O they could be content) many of them) to have them rid out of the Land, and if God did not prevent (whereas the persecution by Bishops is now at an end) who knows (except God humble their hearts more) whether many of Gods dear servants, that do but differ in some point of judgment, might not meet with a great deal of sufferings, even from those that are godly, and that is the worst suffering, better a thousand times suffer from wicked men, it is not so hard to the spirits of godly men to suffer from never so many Bishops and wicked men, as to suffer from one godly man:

Oh!

Oh! there wants that charity and tenderness of spirit one towards another that should be; we are not yet humbled and brought upon our Knees, and therefore it is just with God to lay us upon our backs a while, or that we should even be with our faces upon the ground, and confounded in our own thoughts, before that great Salvation comes that God intendeth for us. That's the first Reason.

2. *Reas.* God brings to straights, *because he takes much delight in the exercise of faith.* (My beloved) Faith, it is a most glorious Grace, it is one of the most glorious things that ever God enabled any creature to do, and especially now, when there is so much guilt upon them; it is a more glorious work than *Adam* performed in Innocency, For a poor creature to believe upon God, for his good here; and in the midst of all extremities to relie upon him, it is a most glorious work, and God is exceedingly delighted in it, and therefore the Scripture calleth Faith, *Precious Faith*, in the beginning of the 2 Epistle of *Peter*: now God loves the acting of precious things; God loves to see the actings of all his creatures, every creature active in his way; but when God hath put such a precious grace as Faith into the heart; Oh! how God doth delight to see the acting of that precious Faith: and therefore it hath been the way of God to go quite cross, after the Lord hath made a promise of mercy and salvation, he goes seemingly cross, and only to exercise Faith; I think I have told you sometimes of that to *Abraham*, that there were but two promises made to him, First, That the Country that God would give him, should flow with milk and honey: and secondly, His seed should be as the starrs of Heaven: and mark what way God goes to bring this about, Assoon as ever he gets into *Canaan*, he was ready to starve there; Is this the Country that flows with milk and honey? And then for the other, His seed should be as the stars of Heaven; he stayed twenty yeers before he had a child, and *Isaac* stayed forty yeers before he had a child; and yet his seed should be great; and *Isaac* must be killed too: and then there was another thing exercised his faith, he would give him the Land, and yet notwithstanding, during his life, he must not possess one foot of the Land, but only a burying-place, and what was the reason of all this? it

was to exercise his faith; and the promise God makes to his Son Christ, *I will give thee the Heathen for thy inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession*; yet Christ must not have a hole to hide his head in, he hath not so much as the Foxes and the Birds have to hide his head in. Thus the way of God is, to seem to go quite contrary, that he might draw forth that glorious work of faith he so much delights in; and because this is the only time of exercising such precious grace, and there shall be no such faith in Heaven exercised as this is, and therefore God (because he will have as much as may be of the excellency of this faith) though he be in a way of salvation, he brings his people into straights.

3. Reas. *Because the Lord delights so much in the prayers of his people, that he might draw out their prayers*: Oh! the voice is sweet, the voice of prayer it is very melodious in the ears of God. it's true, God delights in a praising voice too, but here in this world, rather in prayer, why? because God shall have a Praising voyce to all eternity, Gods Saints shall be praising him to all eternity, but they shall not be praying to him to all eternity; now God delighting so much in the praying voice of his Saints, and he knowing he shall have a great deal of praise from his People when they are delivered from great troubles, no marvel he doth exercise his people: that which pleases God more than Heaven and Earth, is, the exercise of the faith, and the prayers of his people, they are the most pleasing things to God in all the world; and therefore he brings into straights.

4. Reas. *Because God would discover wicked men*: Before he brings his great salvation, he would discover those that are vile and wicked, that they should not partake of that great salvation: As in our times, we know how God in every strait we have been in, hath made some useful discovery to us, it hath been a discovering time, of many that we have known to be vile and naught, that we did not know before: *Luke* 2. 35. (you know the place) *A sword shall pierce thorow thy soul*, why? *that the thoughts of many may be discovered*: there shall be great afflictions and troubles, and the end I aim at is, to discover the thoughts of many: How have mens thoughts been discovered by plots; When God was bringing his People into *Canaan*

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he would not have a rebellious generation come in among them, and all the trouble they had in the wilderneſs, it was by a mixture of a baſe and vile generation, that you have plain in *Numb.* 11. When they were in ſuch a diſtreſſed condition, and in a murmuring and a vexing way: mark the 4. verſe, *The mixt multitude that was among them fell a luſting*: they diſturbed all the hoſt of God. And certainly if men ſhould not be diſcovered, more than they are if God ſhould come to ſet up a ful reformation amongſt us here in *England*, to bring us to that Canaan we deſire, we ſhould be ſo troubled with a mixt multitude, the mixt multitude would ſo vex & trouble the Church of God, that they ſhould ſcarce ever have peace among themſelves; and therefore God in mercy will diſcover them beforehand, before Canaan comes he wil diſcover this mixt multitude.

5. *Reaſ.* God will bring them into ſtraights, *Becauſe he might give occaſion to the Adverſary to vent his malice to the utmoſt, and to ripen his ſin that it may be ripe to the ful, before God comes to deliver us*; that they may be gathered together to be a great ſacrifice to the Lord therefore Gods People are brought to ſuch ſtraits that if they wil blaſpheme, they ſhal blaſpheme to the ful. In our times now, the more ſtraights we are brought into, the greater are the blaſphemies of the wicked; and if God ſhould brings us into more ſtraights, and give them the better over us, I beleeve there will be that horrible blaſphemy in *England*, that never was in any place in the world, the Heavens never did hear, nor the Earth never did bear ſuch blaſphemies, and blaſphemers, as there would be, if God ſhould but deliver up his People in any degree to the hands of their enemies; we know not, but for the ripening of their ſins, and that ſo they may come to be remarkable for Gods vengance on them here in this world, God may give them power over his People, and bring his people yet into greater ſtraights. And then the laſt reaſon is,

(6. Reaſ.) *Becauſe the Work of Jeſus Chriſt wil more appear at the laſt, the greater the ſtraight is*; And therefore in *Dan.* 9. 25. *He wil build the City even in troubleſom times.* Every one can build in quiet times, but in troubled times Chriſt will build up the City: *& he rules in the midſt of his enemies*: Chriſt loves to rule

in the midſt of his enemies, that ſo his rule may be the more conſpicuous.

1. *Uſe.* Is it ſo with us? *Take heed then that we have not our hearts ſink, becauſe of ſtraights*: Let us not ſay, Why is it thus with us? if God be in a way of mercy, why deals he thus with us? and preſently be ready to conclude againſt the waies of God, Certainly all is gone, God is gone, ſurely whatſoever the hopes and confidences of ſuch and ſuch were, we ſee all is undone, all their hopes are undone: God forbid there ſhould be ſuch an unbeleeving heart in any of you, or ſuch murmuring and repining ſpeeches among any of you, whatſoever ſtraight you are brought into.

2. Doct. *In theſe ſtraights, Gods People are mightily troubled.* It was ſo here, in every ſtraight they repin'd, and were in a diſtraction, and eſpecialy at this time; *ſtand ſtil* (ſaith *Moſes*,) what mean you to do? They were all in a confuſion. And as it was here; ſo it is many times in many of Gods Saints. As the bleſſed man *Heman*, that made that 88. *Pſalm*, you ſhal find in that *Pſalm*, he was diſtracted: and yet though *Heman*, was one of the wiſeſt men upon the earth, for ſo you ſhall find it in the 1 of *Kings*; (where the holy Ghoſt ſpeaks of wiſe men) in 4. 31. Solomon *did exceed the wiſdom of al* Egypt, *for* (ſaith the text) *he was wiſer than al men*, than Heman: And yet *Heman* was in woful perplexity, when he was brought into ſtraights. And in the 8. of *Iſaiah*, It was the ſame caſe there, that ſeems to be ours now; Oh there was *a Confederacy a Confederacy*, and many people joyned together againſt Gods ſervants, and upon that (the text ſaith) in the 11. verſ. *The Lord ſpake to me with a ſtrong hand, & inſtructed me that I ſhould not walk in the way of this people ſaying, ſay ye not, A Confederecy to al them to whom their people ſhal ſay, A Confederacy, neither fear ye their fear.* Mark, God was fain to ſpeak to the Prophet with a ſtrong hand, that he ſhould not be ſo troubled, as other people were in the time of their fear. Yea, we ſhal find that many of Gods Saints, that he hath delivered in a moſt glorious way, yet at ſome other times they have bin too ſecure, their hearts have bin al in a confuſion, & were not able to ſtand before the difficulties that they met with-al; & for that you have a famous example, 1 Kings, 19. of *Elijah*, if you

you read the 18. Chap. you may ſee what a Spirit Elijah had, he would appear before *Ahab*, *as the Lord of hoſts lives, before whom I ſtand, I will ſurely ſhow my ſelf to him, to day*, (to *Ahab*) and he did ſhew himſelf to *Ahab* and tels him it was he and his people, that troubled *Iſrael*; when *Ahab* ſaid to him, *Art thou he that troubleth Iſrael? No* ſaith he, *It is thou & thy fathers houſe that troubleth Iſrael.* And then he comes and gets the Prieſts of *Baal* together, and gets fire from Heaven, to conſume the Sacrifice, and deſtroies al the Prieſts of *Baal*: and gets rain from heaven to rain upon the earth: what an excellent Spirit had *Elijah* in the 18. Chapter? Yet in the 19. Chapter, *Jezabel* did but threaten *Elijah*, and he takes him to his heels, and runs away at the threatning of wicked *Jezabel*; though he had ſuch a brave Spirit in the former Chapter. So is it truly with many men, at ſome times their courage makes their adverſaries afraid, and at other times, their cowardice makes their freinds aſhamed; many have been ſo, they have been a terror to their adverſaries one day, and a ſhame to their friends another day. The Reaſon is,

Reaſ. 1. *Becauſe we have much fleſh ſtil in the beſt of us al, and we are much led by ſence*; and becauſe we are not throughly skilful in the waies of God, becauſe the fear of God is ſo weak in us, therefore it is that the fear of man is ſo ſtrong, and therfore we know ſo little of Gods ſecrets; the ſecrets of God are with them that fear him, did we fear God more we ſhould know his ſecret waies, and not be ſo much troubled.

Reaſ. 2. *Becauſe there is a great deal of guilt reſts in the beſt* & that will make any one afraid; where there is much guiltineſs in their hearts, it is exceeding troubleſom to the ſoul.

Reaſ. 3. *Becauſe they are too too confident in the fleſh, they are too too confident in themſelves*, Thence it is that God withdraws himſelf from them: and at what time they are afraid, they cannot truſt in God, as *David* (it is an admirable ſweet text) profeſſes of himſelf, *that at what tyme he was afraid, he would truſt in God*: There is many a man for the preſent thinks he can truſt in God, but he cannot do it at that time when he is afraid: *Pſal* 56. 3 *What time I am afraid, I will truſt in the Lord.* When your paſſion comes, then you make no uſe of your faith, to truſt in God: As now, many a man & woman can be meek and quiet

quiet, till they have a temptation, but when your Paſſion is up can you be meek then? and riſe then, and beat it down with the contrary grace? So when the paſſion of your fears and troubles come up, can you then truſt in God? I, that is ſomewhat like; but becauſe we truſt ſo much in our ſelves, therefore when the time cometh we ſhould truſt in God, God withdraws himſelf from us, and we are moſt afraid.

Uſe. This is that we ſhould lay our hands upon our hearts, and charge our ſouls for, and be aſhamed before the Lord: Never a one here but hath cauſe to lay his hand upon his heart and ſay, Oh that I, that have had ſo much experience of God, of his waies of helping and delivering me, out of ſix troubles and ſeven, and yet the Lord knowes upon any new trouble I am to ſeek as much as ever, and in any hurly-burly in as great diſtemper of fear as ever; be aſhamed of this before the Lord. It is true, Gods people may be ſo, and you are ſo, therefore be aſhamed of it; and labor to prepare for ſuch times; Thoſe that are troubled with fainting fits, uſe to carry their bottle of *Aqua-vitæ* about with them; ſo you that have been diſquieted in times of trouble, lay up ſomewhat that may help in thoſe times. Though a Candle light will ſerve to carry in a yard in calm weather, yet it muſt be a Torch, a great light that muſt ſerve when the wind blows; ſo a little may ſerve now, but a great deal muſt be laid up for times of extremity.

Firſt, Lay up Encouraging Promiſes.

Secondly, lay up Encouraging Experiences, that may help you againſt ſuch times of fainting and trouble.

Uſe. 2. But then, if it be ſo with the Saints and Gods own people, that when they are in ſtraights, they are ſo ready to be troubled with diſtracting fears & cares, what ſhal become of the wicked and ungodly then; when they come into ſtraights, how muſt their hearts ſink in horror? becauſe al their ſtraights are no other, but the beginning of eternal ſtraights, preſent ſorrows making a way to eternal ſorrows, the way of their deliverance from preſent ſtraights is, by being brought into greater ſtraights; Many women with child have ſtrong pains in their child birth, yet when they think they ſhal be delivered, they have joy inſtead of ſorrow; but a woman that is with child

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and is only reprieved becauſe ſhe is with child, till ſhe be delivered, though ſhe have a great deal of trouble and pain before ſhe be delivered, ſhe deſires not to be rid of it, becauſe then ſhe knows ſhe ſhal come to greater, to be hang'd, and if ſhe could live ſeven yeers together and never be delivered, ſhe could be content with the trouble, becauſe when that is gone, greater comes: So wicked and ungodly men that are in great ſtraights for the preſent, may well be content with them, becauſe when they are gone, greater will come.

3. Doct. *In the time of thoſe ſtraights, it is our duty, to ſtand ſtil & look for Gods ſalvation, to quiet our ſpirits, & look up to God*

Firſt, *For the quieting our ſpirits.*

As they were to be delivered out of this bondage in that way; ſo they were to be delivered out of the *Babyloniſh* bondage in the ſame way: So you ſhal find in *Iſa.* 30. ſee what God ſaith for that deliverance, he tels them plainly at the 15. verſ. *In quietneſs & in confidence ſhal be your ſtrength, and you would not.* In quietnes & confidence; it's true, they were in a paſſionate way, and God tels them, that in quietneſs and confidence is their ſtrength, and they would not. So, come to many people that are in great extremities, to ſome women and others, (when they are wringing their hands, and hanging about their husbands necks) and tel them, your confidence muſt be in quietneſs; they wil be ready to throw you off. But they would not (ſaith God) So in *Iſa.* 30. 7. *I cried concerning this, Their ſtrength, is to ſit ſtil.* My Brethren, this day in the name of God, do I cry concerning al our ſtraights, after we have uſed al the means we can, we are to ſit ſtil, *& ſee the ſalvation of our God*, to quiet our hearts with this *beleeving ſtand ſtil*, and look up to God for our ſalvation. It was their great fault, they did not ſo in their deliverance out of their captivity; there is one remarkable place for that, *Jer.* 31. 22. *How long wilt thou go about? Oh thou back-ſliding daughter! for the Lord hath created a new thing in the earth:* How long wilt thou go about, Oh thou backſliding daughter? What's the meaning of this text? It is thus, In the time of their deliverance from Captivity, they met with a great deal of difficulty, many ſtraights, & they went about to this & that ſharking courſe, and did backſlide, when they were in a good way, they went back again, & the Prophet could not get them to ſtand ſtil in any way

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as if he should have said, Go on right in the way, be not discouraged by difficulties, by extremities, seek not any shifting way, be not backsliding, but stand to your tackling and work God hath set you about, for the Lord hath created a new thing. Perhaps you wil say, There was never the like straight we are in; Wel, God hath such mercy as he never shewed the like before; God hath created a new thing. Many cry out in their straights, O my affliction, and my straight is such as never was in the world! Wel, gratifie them so; (as many times we must needs gratifie distempered spirits, when they cry out of the greatness of their straights) yet is there no comfort for them to stay them? yes, *Isa.* 64. 4. *It was never known since the beginning of the world what God hath laid up for them that wait for him*: Do but wait for him, & there was never such mercy shown in the world; as God hath laid up for thee; so that, come let us grant it, that there was never the like of that affliction that thou art under; yet there is reason enough for thee to wait, and look for the salvation of God, in such a way, in such a condition.

I shal give some Reasons of that part of the Doctrine, that we are to stand stil, and be quiet: for by our standing stil, and our quieting our hearts in our straights,

1. Reas. *We are fit to look to the Wisdom, Faithfulneß, & power of God*; we are not able to see Gods Wisdom, Faithfulness, and Power, nor to make use of it, *except we get our spirits to be quiet*: first get them quiet, and then we can look up to God, *Psalm*, 46. 10. *Be still* (saith the text) *and know that I am God*, There is a God in Heaven that can help and succour in time of great straights and extremities; but for al this, people are in a hurly-burly, and their spirits are distemper'd, they are wringing their hands, and crying, they cannot know that God is God, they can have no use of all the Power and Goodness, and Faithfulness, and Mercy of God. First get your hearts stil and quiet in your Families, and in your own spirits, and then you shal know that God is God: God wil not appear till first you be still.

2. Reas. *We are not able to make use of our own Graces, till we be quiet and still*; If God have bestowed Graces when we are in a hurly-burly, we have no use of them at all; therefore faith

ſaith the text, *Pſalm*, 4. *Stand in awe, ſin not, commune with your own hearts upon your beds, and be ſtill:* Commune with your own hearts: you have ſomewhat (perhaps) in your own hearts that may quiet you; commune with your own hearts, and be ſtill; you are not fit to commune with your own hearts till you get them quiet; firſt be quiet, and then commune. (Oh! my brethren) A man or woman of a ſtaid, ſound, quiet, and ſtil ſpirit, hath a mighty advantage of al Paſſionate ſpirits; there are many of you, that are paſſionate at all other times, and that is the reaſon that in ſuch great extremities you are ſo over-rul'd with paſſion; you are ſo over-rul'd with your paſſion of Anger at other times, and out of Gods juſt judgment, you are over-rul'd with the paſſion of fear now: But if at other times you would labor to keep in your ſpirits, God would help you now.

3. *Reaſ.* Becauſe without this ſtilneſs, and quietneſs, we cannot manifeſt that ſubjection to God we owe him; for then there is a great deal of ſin, and pride, and ſtoutneſs committed againſt God; and therfore in the fourth *Pſalm*, the old Latine hath it *My ſoul be ſilent*; my ſoul is ſubject to God; the ſubjection of our ſoul to God, depends much upon this Quieting of our hearts.

4. *Reaſ.* Our reverence of God depends much upon it: and therefore in this 4. *Pſal. Stand in awe & ſin not, commune with your own heart, & be ſtil*: for us to behave our ſelves in ſuch a manner as many people do, wringing and throwing out their hands, and keeping ſuch a ſtir as they do; this ſhows there is not in their hearts that reverence they owe to God; *ſtand in awe* If your hearts were poſſeſſ'd with Gods fear, you would not keep ſuch a ſtir as you do in times of great danger.

5. *Reaſ.* This makes people unfit to liſten to any thing that is ſpoken to them; let any thing be ſpoken to them, that is of any uſe, they cannot hear it nor make uſe of it; as we read of the people of *Iſrael*, *Exod.* 6. 9. when *Moſes* came to tel them of their deliverance, the text ſaith, *He ſpake to the children of* Iſrael, *but they hearkned not to him*: why? *for anguiſh of ſpirit*: How many in trouble of conſcience, and in other times of extremity, have their ſpirit in ſuch anguiſh, that they never hear-

ken to any thing that is delivered to them; and therfore they come with the same objection over and over again, a hundred times in cases of conscience.

6. Without this Quietness of spirit, you are mighty hinderers of others, and you daunt and discourage the hearts of others, and many times the cause miscarries meerly upon the unquietness of the hearts of men and women in time of danger; therefore you must be quiet, and look up to God for salvation; for Faith hath this excellency, that it is able to bring life out of death, light out of darkness; it hath a kind of creating vertue; as God himself brings one contrary out of another, so faith hath such a kind of working, if faith be of the right stamp, a genuine faith, it hath a mighty Power in times of extremity to behold Gods salvation, and make use of it: I'le give you one example of the use of faith in times of extremity; and that is of *David*, when he fled from *Saul*, & when he was in the Cave; mark, *Be merciful to me O God, be merciful to me, for my soul trusteth in thee, yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge*. What was the shadow of Gods wings? poor *David* was got into the shadow of the Cave, and the Sun did not shine upon him, but he looked upon himself in the Cave, as under the shadow of Gods wings: You poor people that live it may be in Cellers, and in poor dark holes and Lanes, the Sun scarce shines upon you in a year, yet if you be Godly, you are under Gods wings by faith.

I shall now speak to the Second part of the Doctrine that we are to expect Salvation from God.

David did fly from *Absolom*, & yet what confidence had *David* (in that case) in God? read but that third *Psalm*, and you'l see confidence enough in *David*, and yet flying too: Divers grounds and reasons I shall give for this, why we must look up to God as wel as be still.

1 *Reas.* Hereby we sanctifie Gods Name; *Fear ye not their fear, but sanctifie God in your hearts* (saith the text) You sanctifie not God else: I suppose many of you would be loth to be guilty of swearing, and taking Gods Name in vain in that kind, but by your

your diſtracting thoughts, and unbeſeeming cariage in times of danger, you take Gods Name in vain, you break the third Commandement.

2. *Reaſ.* This ſhews the beauty and excellency of Faith, as *David* ſaid, *Thou ſhalt ſee what thy ſervant can do*: So now, there is a great deal of talk of faith in the world, let us ſee now what it can do; the truth of love is, when I can love God for himſelf without his gifts; ſo when I can beleeve in God without experience, I ſhew the excellency of my faith when I can truſt in God meerly upon his Word; as I love God meerly for Himſelf, when my faith takes Gods ſingle bond without any ſecurity, that is the excellency of Faith; when I would have outward helps and aſſurances, there I call for ſureties; So Chriſtians when they muſt needs have outward helps, and former experiences, they call to God for ſureties, as if they would not truſt God upon his ſingle bond; that's the excellency of faith to truſt God upon his ſingle bond.

3. *Reaſ.* When we look up to God for ſalvation, we engage God in our cauſe; God owns not the cauſe till then, and then he owns it: Now how happy were we, if thus we could do in al our particular and private ſtraights, *ſtand ſtil and look up to God for help and for ſalvation*: It's true, you cry out and complain, I have loſt a dear husband, and a dear friend, never man loſt ſuch a friend, and theſe great ſtraights I am brought into; but loſe not the quiet of thy heart too, take heed of that, that is a greater loſs than any loſs thou canſt have in this world. I remember I have read of a Phyloſopher that had this expreſſion, (ſaith he) If the gods would grant me my deſire, and bid me ask what I would have, I would ask them this thing, That I might have the compoſed ſpirit of *Socrates*, that I might have ſuch a ſpirit as *Socrates* had; for it is obſerved of him, that he did ſcarce change his countenance upon any thing that befel him, he was alwaies in a quiet compoſed frame, (and yet a Heathen;) How much more ſhould a Chriſtian ſay; If God would give me my asking, I would ask nothing but that; for indeed there is a great deal of glory and excellency in a Compoſed ſpirit; this is worthy of the Goſpel; therefore mark what the Apoſtle ſaith, *Phil.* 1. 27. *Only let your converſation be as it becometh the Goſpel of Chriſt, that*

whether I come to see you, or be absent from you, I may hear of your affairs, and that you stand fast in one spirit: This is to walk worthy of the Gospel, to stand fast in one spirit: & observe this, that except we do stand fast, and quiet our hearts, we lose every thing that should help us: when we are in a hurly-burly in our spirits to get some help, alas, we lose all our help: Therefore in *Phil.* 4. *Let the peace of God keep your hearts*, the word in the Original is, *Guard your hearts*; The peace of God in your hearts must be the best guard of your hearts in the time of danger; now because you would avoid trouble, you put away your guard, what a madness is this? the casting away the peace of God, is the casting away of your guard, therefore keep that in your hearts, whatsoever you lose; yea, it's our Arms; Mark, *Ephes.* 6. what is the Arms of a Christian? first *The girdle of truth*. Fear dissolves the heart, and makes a man he cannot gird himself: When he is in fear, his heart is melted, & he hath little use of his truth; the girdle is loosed then; In the text, there is the helmet of salvation, but in fear hope is gone; there is the brest-plate of righteousness, but in fear, a man hath no use of his righteous conversation, nor no use of the sword of the Spirit, he can use nothing in times of such distracting fears; therefore lose not your Arms: It is very observable, in *Ephes.* 6. how the holy Ghost still cals upon us to stand, ver. 10. *My brethren be strong in the Lord*, & not only strong, *But strong in the Lord* and strong in the *might of the Lord, and in the power of his might*; *put on the whol Armor of God, that you may be able to Stand*; then again, in ver. 13. *Wherefore take ye all the whol Armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand the evil one*; *and having done all, to stand*: Though perhaps, you have overcome at one time, yet still look to your own hearts when you have done all, *stand*, four times we are called upon *to stand*, noting, what a great advantage we have by standing; It's true, our afflictions are great, and the soul saith, *The Lord is my portion*; perhaps temptations and afflictions say otherwise, but the soul saith, *The Lord is my portion*; and it is good for a man to say, What shall I that am so ful of sin, yet not be willing to have some trouble but be so ful of fears upon every trouble that befals me? why should not I yield to Gods providential will as well as to his commanding will? how know

I,

I, but that God may have glorious ends, to work out of these extremities and troubles I am in; Why should I not give up my self to God, to have his wil upon me? and hath not God heretofore delivered me from great straights and extremities, even from the Wrath of God Himself, and from His Justice? greater and other manner of straights than those I am now in; and if I beleeve not in God now, but be disquieted, perhaps these straights may be to bring me to greater straights, what if these straights of affliction should bring me to greater straights? and it's just with God to leave me to fal into the straights of sin, that cannot bear the straights of afflictions, therfore let me stand stil and look up to Gods salvation; Let us be so affected with our straights as to carry us up to God in prayer; pray as much as ye can, but stil keep your hearts in a quiet frame; and if your prayers be right, they wil be to you, as *Luther* saith, they were the leeches of his care; *Luther* had a great many corrupt cares, (as in a corrupt body, there is much corrupt blood) but now his Prayers were the leeches to suck out his cares: when you are distempered, go to prayer, & then examin what a deal of corrupt blood hath my prayers sucke out of my heart? As *Hannah*, when she had been at prayer she lookt no more sad. There are many things I thought to have given you, to stay your hearts in times of extremities: *Peace shal be to that man, that hath his heart stayed on God*; *and blessed is that man that stayeth his heart upon God*: and if ever people had cause to stay their hearts upon God, certainly we have at this time, for we have God with us; Therefore its unworthy of a Christian to have a distempered spirit. I remember I have read of the Romans, that when *Hannibal* was just before them, yet they bought and sold their ground as they did at other times; they were so quiet in their hearts. It was a speech that *Antigonor* had when some were afraid of the multitude that came against him, (say they) So many are coming against us; saith he, How many do you reckon me for? So may we say, we hear of so many thousands coming against us; But how many do you reckon Jesus Christ for? How many reckon you him for, that is the Captain of al our Hosts? Have not prayers been sent up to God? Why despise you the prayers of the Saints of God, as if there were nothing in their prayers?

prayers? Is not Gods Name engaged in all this buſineſs? Oh therefore *ſtand ſtil* and be not afraid. And eſpecially let me ſpeak a word to you, that are of timorous and fearful ſpirits, *Iſa.* 35. 4. *Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Fear not*: Do not excuſe your ſelves in this, that you are of a timorous nature; (ſaith God) *Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Fear not*: And eſpecially mark what the holy Ghoſt ſpeaks to women, in 1 *Pet.* 3. *Women they muſt cloath themſelves with a meek and quiet ſpirit*, (that's in the 4. verſ.) *which is in the ſight of God, of great price.* And in the 6. verſe, *And as* Sarah *obeyed* Abraham, *& called him Lord, whoſe daughters ye are, as long as you do wel, & are not afraid of any amazement*: What ſhould be the meaning of that, that women muſt be the daughters of *Sarah* upon theſe terms? Thus; *Abraham* was brought into ſtraights many times, and carried from his own Country; now *Sarah* if ſhe had been of ſuch a ſpirit as many women are, Oh how would *Sarah* have hindred her husband *Abraham* in every ſtraight he was brought into; and have ſaid, Husband, why go we from our own Country, and our friends, and ſo are brought into ſuch ſtraights? pray Husband go back again, and venture not your ſelf thus and thus: but it ſeems ſhe was of a gracious ſpirit, and quieted her ſelf in God, and was not afraid with amazement: If you would approve your ſelves the daughters of *Sarah*, do ye ſo, when God cals your husbands to any ſervice, though it be with ſome hazard, do you hang about their necks, and wring your hands, and ſay, I beſeech you husband conſider what wil become of me and my children, wil you leave me now? Take heed, you are not the daughters of *Sarah* at ſuch a time, if you hinder your husbands at ſuch a time as this is.

4. Doct. *That the ſight of ſalvation after ſtraights, wil be a glorious thing.* If we be brought into ſtraights, that which is coming wil pay for al, there is enough to ſatisfie; let us not be troubled at greater ſtraights, than yet we have; Suppoſe blood ſhould be ſhed (beloved) God hath ſuch mercy for *England*, that ſhall pay for all the blood of his Saints that ſhall be ſhed; and the blood of his people, is a precious thing: Every drop of the blood of his people is very precious: and the Adverſary ſhal be accomptable for every drop; God will value it, and there ſhall

ſhall be a valuable conſideration given for every drop of blood; and the more difficulties we have in obtaining that mercy God is about to give us, the mercy ſhall be the greater: *Iſa.* 54. 11. *O thou afflicted and toſt with tempeſts, thy foundations ſhal be laid with Saphires, and with precious Stones.* If we be afflicted and toſſed with tempeſts, and the blood of Gods people go for it; comfort your ſelves with this; The more precious blood that is ſhed in this buſineſs, the greater mercy is to come; for God wil have a valuable conſideration for al the blood of his Saints.

FINIS.

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